



# Jordan Times

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Jordanian Press Foundation  
المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأسي  
جوردان تايمز يومية

## 47% of Israelis support 'Palestine'

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — An opinion poll published by the Israel daily Yediot Aharonot on Tuesday showed that at least half of all Israelis supported the creation of a Palestinian state within agreed borders in the occupied territories. The survey was the first to show a majority of Israelis favouring such a state, said Hanech Smith, director of the institute which carried out the telephone poll of 500 people in late December. Of those questioned 47 per cent said they supported the establishment of a Palestinian state "within definite and agreed borders." Forty per cent were against such an arrangement, while the remainder were undecided. Asked how respondents viewed an autonomy agreement that led to quiet borders, 69 per cent said it would be a success and 22 per cent said it would be a failure. Nine per cent had no opinion. If an autonomy agreement does not end Palestinian attacks on Israelis, 70 per cent would consider it a failure and 17 per cent would see it as a success. Thirteen per cent had no opinion. Sixty per cent said they wanted the government to continue negotiations with the PLO.

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## Regent sends cable of condolence to Clinton

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday sent a cable to U.S. President Bill Clinton to condole him over the death of about 30 Americans as a result of the earthquake which hit Southern California Monday. "In my name and behalf of Jordanian people and government I offer our deepest condolences over the grave losses and the destruction left by the earthquake," Prince Hassan said. (see page 8 for report from California) Jordan's Ambassador in Washington Fayez Al Tarawneh said Tuesday all Jordanians living in southern California were safe.

## Regent condoles soldier's family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday visited the home of Hamed Al Ra'ayah, an army sergeant who was killed in Croatia recently while performing his duty as member of the Jordanian contingent serving with the U.N. peacekeeping force in former Yugoslavia. Prince Hassan offered his condolences to the family. Sgt. Ra'ayah was killed when a boat carrying him and three other Jordanian peacekeepers overturned while transporting humanitarian assistance to besieged families.

## U.N. extends sanctions against Iraq

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council on Tuesday decided to extend economic sanctions against Iraq for another 60 days. Ambassador Karel Kovanda of the Czech Republic, president of the 15-nation Security Council this month, said the decision was taken in a closed meeting of the body. He said "two or three members" suggested easing sanctions, which is called a "distinct minority."

## Italian cabinet sets two-day poll

ROME (R) — The Italian government issued a decree Tuesday extending landmark March 27 general elections to March 28 after Jews objected that they would have to vote on the start of Passover, state television said. The measure needs approval by parliament, even though it has been dissolved, but has already won wide political party support and was immediately welcomed by Italy's Jewish community. The decree sanctioning two-day elections will allow Jews to vote after sundown on March 28. State Television said polling stations would stay open until 10 p.m.

## Hassan II denounces Islamic extremism

RABAT (AP) — King Hassan II of Morocco has condemned Islamic extremism, saying his country remains a bulwark against the movement and an example for other Arab states. "Never has violence been a method of persuasion for Islam's enemies and even less so for its own people," King Hassan said in a letter to Islamic scholars from several Arab states meeting at a Moroccan university. King Hassan has so far been able to keep extremists in neighbouring Algeria from making gains in his own country, without offending the fundamentalist tendency at home. In terms of freedom and democracy, "the Moroccan experience is amply cited and, in the Islamic World, it is cited as an example," the letter said.

## Zhivkov to enter jail this week

SOFIA (AFP) — Bulgaria's former communist leader Todor Zhivkov, 82, said he was not afraid of prison, following the confirmation Tuesday of a seven-year jail sentence. The country's supreme court upheld the sentence imposed in September 1992 for abuse of power and embezzlement, rejecting Mr. Zhivkov's appeal. He will also have to pay a fine of 22 million leva (\$600,000).

# Sharaa briefs Regent on results of Geneva summit

## Syrian minister says ball is in Israeli court after Assad comments, assails proposal for Golan poll

### Jordan reiterates need for Arab coordination

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

AMMAN — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa on Tuesday briefed His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on the outcome of Sunday's summit meeting between Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

During a meeting held at the Royal Palace shortly after Mr. Sharaa's arrival here, the Regent and the Syrian minister also reviewed Jordanian-Syrian relations and the two countries' stand vis-a-vis the Middle East peace process, the

secret deal worked out between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel without coordination with the PLO's Arab partners in the peace process.

Mr. Sharaa, who left after the meeting, told Petra in departure comments that his talks here focused on the peace process, the Assad-Clinton summit in Geneva, Jordanian-Syrian relations and Arab coordination. "I feel that contacts should continue among the Arab parties directly involved in the peace process and that the contacts should be more enhanced," he was quoted as saying by Petra. "Coordination and consultations should continue among the three Arab parties which have maintained serious coordination among themselves — Jordan, Syria and Lebanon."

The implicit reference was to

the secret deal worked out between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel without coordination with the PLO's Arab partners in the peace process.

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# Rabin grudgingly accepts Assad's peace declaration

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Tuesday grudgingly accepted Syrian President Hafez Al Assad's statements on peace as a basis for continued negotiations.

Mr. Rabin also cautioned the Israeli public that the cost of peace with Syria could be higher than it had expected.

"I expected more (from this week's U.S.-Syria summit). For the sake of the negotiations, I am willing to make do with what was said and that which was unsaid and was reported to us (by U.S. peace envoys)," Mr. Rabin told reporters.

Mr. Assad, speaking at a Geneva news conference with U.S. President Bill Clinton on Sunday, said Syria could have "normal peaceful relations" with Israel under a "peace of the brave."

Two-year-long Israel-Syria peace talks, due to resume in Washington later this month, were suspended four months ago. The break came after negotiations had failed to make progress on the future of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and a Syrian definition of peace.

security. Israeli media said the referendum proposal was a signal to the Syrians and Americans to go slow.

"The message to Assad is simple: 'We've heard from the Americans that you are pressuring and you want to achieve peace this year. So please, soften your demands, otherwise we will have to turn to a referendum and then the peace process will be suspended,'" said the Israeli daily Davar.

A senior official close to the prime minister's office agreed that the proposal was a warning to Syria and the United States.

"We don't want to give the Syrians the impression that a withdrawal from the Golan has already been achieved. If Damascus goes too far in its demands, we will ask the people to give its opinion," he explained.

If the demands are moderate, there will be no referendum," the official said, declining to be named.

"We feel that Syria and the United States have reached an agreement. But they must know that for a withdrawal to

# Israelis wound 15

HEBRON, Occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli troops shot and wounded at least 14 Palestinian youths in clashes in the occupied territories on Tuesday, Palestinian sources said.

The most serious clashes occurred in Hebron in the West Bank, where nine schoolchildren and students from an Islamic college were wounded. Witnesses said the soldiers opened fire after youths threw stones at them.

They were among several hundred youths who gathered to mark the killing of four alleged members of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas by Israeli troops in Hebron last week.

One student was rushed to hospital with a serious head wound.

A military spokesman confirmed that clashes took place in Hebron.

The four alleged Hamas members were killed overnight Thursday attended the same Islamic college in Hebron. They included Abdul Salim Amin Shabana, described by the Israeli army as head of the Hamas military wing Izzedin Al Qassam in Hebron.

Meanwhile in Nabulus further south of air raid

formerly Marxist South and the conservative north have yet to integrate.

A statement by Mr. Saleh's GPC alleging the bombing said: "On Monday evening, a warplane took off from its base in Aden and flew at low altitude over Al Amalqa camp... and opened fire and dropped bombs."

It was swiftly denied by a senior airforce officer in Aden who said that southern aircraft exercising close to the border had not engaged in any bombing mission.

The GPC statement said it was the first time since the merger that a Yemeni unit had used force against another. It did not report any deaths but said "areas neighbouring the camp were damaged."

A spokesman said the northern brigade retaliated with anti-aircraft fire but the MiG was not hit and returned to Badr airbase, near Aden.

However, a spokesman at Badr denied the charge, insisting the plane was on a routine training mission.

The northern official warned that the attack was "an act of



His Royal Highness Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday confers with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa (centre), who paid a short visit to Amman to brief the Regent on the outcome of

Sunday's summit meeting between President Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton (AFP photo)

# Majali hails Geneva summit, says Arabs await Israeli step

Premier leaves to join King in White House talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said Tuesday the U.S.-Syrian summit in Geneva was successful and expressed hope that 1994 would be a year of peace in the Middle East.

It was Jordan's first official reaction to Sunday's meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad.

"All what we heard about this summit and the signs that came out from the two sides show that it succeeded well," Dr. Majali told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, before leaving for London en route to Washington to attend Friday's meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and President Clinton.

"The Israeli side is now expected to make the necessary and appropriate response to the (Syrian move) because the Israelis have always said they were ready for peace and for withdrawal if Syria announced its acceptance of comprehensive peace, which is what it just did."

The outcome of the Geneva summit and next steps in the 26-month-old U.S.-backed Middle East peace process are expected to figure high in King Hussein's talks with President Clinton.

Dr. Majali said the meeting will advance the peace process and said the two leaders will discuss the course of peace talks in all tracks.

Dr. Majali noted that the King had met with President Clinton more than six months ago and that it was necessary for them to meet again to review bilateral relations, which are improving following the end of the Gulf crisis.

He added that great developments had taken place since the first meeting between the King and President Clinton, including the Palestinian-Israeli accord and the Clinton-Assad summit as well as the bilateral and multilateral peace talks. This, Dr. Majali said, requires that "we focus on where we have reached and what to do next, particularly in relation to the American-Jordanian relations."

On the next round of Arab-Israeli peace talks which will be held in Washington, Dr. Majali said he expects progress in the talks.

He added that the forthcoming round of talks might be restricted to the heads of delegations and heads of committees, who are in a position to take political decisions.

At a later stage the various committees will meet to discuss

various issues of interest to the parties involved, he said.

Dr. Majali called for designating certain places in Europe or Washington for holding the talks because it is tiresome and costly to keep sending delegations here and there.

Referring to Monday's visit to Jordan by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, Dr. Majali noted that it was the first time such a visit by a commerce secretary takes place. He stressed the importance of the visit, saying it provides an opportunity for discussing the negative implications on Jordan caused by the UN embargo on Iraq and the inspection of ships heading for Aqaba.

He said the U.N. embargo on Iraq had inflicted damage on Jordan's economy and trade which relies to a great extent on Iraqi markets.

Dr. Majali described the talks with Mr. Ron as useful and voiced hope that they would result in a favourable change, particularly in relation to the inspection of ships heading for Jordan.

Dr. Majali said Jordan believes the embargo on Iraq should be lifted because it is inflicting great and unprecedented damage on the Iraqi people.

# Jordan seeks to shed unfair U.N. shackles on its exports to Iraq

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has officially sought United Nations permission for exporting Jordanian products to Iraq without having to go through the procedures of seeking prior approval. Finance Minister Sami Gammoh said Tuesday.

The request was prompted by the Kingdom's frustration over what it saw as a discriminatory policy by the U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committee while dealing with Jordanian requests for approval for exports to Iraq exempt from the sweeping embargo imposed 40 months ago.

Mr. Gammoh, quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali had instructed Jordan's permanent representative at the United Nations to request the Sanctions Committee "to deal with all requests for permissions for exports to Iraq on an equal footing."

The finance minister did not indicate when the request was filed or whether Jordan had received diplomatic signals that its bid would be considered positively.

Mr. Gammoh told Petra that while the committee refused permission for Jordanian exports of some items it dispensed approvals for non-Jordanian exports of the same products.

He said that the committee approved 11 requests for the exports of Jordanian clothing to Iraq out of a total of 76, and 41 of them were turned down without citing any reason for the refusal.

Jordan filed 3,707 requests between Oct. 27, 1992 and Dec. 12, 1993 but only 571 of them were approved, Mr. Gammoh said.

Officials have long been saying that Jordanian requests for approval were being either deliberately delayed or turned down altogether, but Mr. Gammoh's comments were the first to cite figures and present a clearer picture of the situation.

Mr. Gammoh said Jordan had sent several memos to the Sanctions Committee as well as the Security Council appealing for a reconsideration of the procedures, but no action had been taken in response.

Dr. Majali will be meeting the Sanctions Committee on Jan. 27, Mr. Gammoh said. Businessmen say that apart from the political considerations that may be playing a key role behind such treatment of Jordanian applications, business interests also appeared to figure in the refusals.

They note that rejection or stalling over Jordanian requests served the business interests of others seeking to enter the Iraqi market.

The businessmen point out that the committee is the sole authority empowered to issue permissions for export to Iraq of items exempt from the international sanctions imposed against that country following its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

In that capacity, officials working with the committee had access of all documents pertaining to applications for approvals and this enables them to help one supplier against another, the business-

men say.

No Jordanian official was immediately available for comment on this aspect of the situation.

The sanctions have deprived Jordan of an annual market of not less than \$200 million and dealt a severe blow to Jordanian manufacturers who had depended on the Iraqi market for their sales and had attained their manufacturing specifications to suit the Iraqis.

In public comments, senior European as well as American officials have repeatedly affirmed since mid-1992 that they were satisfied with Jordan's enforcement of the sanctions against Iraq and its adherence to the procedures laid down by the Sanctions Committee.

All members of the Security Council are represented in the Sanctions Committee, but the panel itself functions with what many Jordanian and non-Jordanian exporters, describe as a bureaucracy much worse than most.

In his comments on Tuesday, Mr. Gammoh said Jordan did raise the issue with an American fact-finding team headed by Ambassador David Newton who visited Jordan in September. The team was dispatched by the Clinton administration after repeated Jordanian appeals for a reconsideration of the procedures applied to exports for Iraq, including the inspection of cargo aboard ships bound for Aqaba.

The Newton team met with officials as well as Jordanian businessmen who presented it with a detailed report on the

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## Assad to Clinton: Freedom fighters are not terrorists

BEIRUT (R) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad was quoted Tuesday as telling U.S. President Bill Clinton that Arab groups fighting Israel were not terrorists but freedom fighters — just like the Americans who fought the British for their independence.

"How can a Palestinian boy fighting against the Israeli occupation army to liberate his land be described as a terrorist? He's a fighter not a terrorist," Mr. Assad was quoted as saying.

Mr. Assad's passionate remarks during Sunday's summit in Geneva were quoted by Talal Salzman, editor of the pro-Syrian Lebanese daily Al Safir who covered the meeting.

"This boy... whether he belongs to Hizbollah or to any other faction of the national resistance movements... who dares to call him a terrorist?" Mr. Salzman quoted Mr. Assad as adding.

"Who says that working to liberate occupied land can be classified as terrorism? If that was true then the American 'war of liberation' can be considered terrorism. Did you not fight whom you considered to be an occupier? Were George Washington and his comrades 'terrorists'?" Mr. Assad asked.

Mr. Assad told Clinton it was "unacceptable" to brand those who helped the freedom fighters as supporters of terrorism, as the United States has branded Syria by placing it on a list of countries it says supports "terrorism."

The United States and Israel say Syria could cut off supplies and disarm Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God), which is fighting to oust Israeli troops from a buffer zone in South Lebanon.

Lebanon and Syria, which has 35,000 troops deployed in Lebanon, have so far refused to disarm the group saying it will be disarmed when Israel withdraws from South Lebanon.

Mr. Assad said the United States had to be an "honest broker" in Arab-Israeli peace talks but hinted strongly that Israel was influencing Washington's policies.

"What is the interest of a great country like yours in being biased so it becomes a party in this (Arab-Israeli) feud and therefore loses its role as an international authority, an honest broker and complete partner in the peace making?" Mr. Assad said.

"We want good relations, not relations based on accusa-



Palestinian children sit over a wall and shout nationalist slogans during a rally in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

tion, on suspicion, and not controlled by he who wants the misunderstanding between us to continue so his dangerous influence over your decision continues," Mr. Assad said.

He said separate peace pacts between Israel and each of the Arab partners would weaken the U.S. role and hinder a comprehensive and lasting peace.

"You have to assert your commitment to this role which made us agree to go to Madrid but then we were taken by surprise that it built a roar for itself to Oslo from behind our backs... where is Washington?" Mr. Assad asked.

## Turkish president calls for end to sanctions on Iraq

ANKARA (R) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel called Monday for the lifting of U.N. sanctions against Iraq, saying the Iraqi people had suffered enough.

"In my opinion, sanctions are to be lifted," he told Reuters in an interview on the third anniversary of the outbreak of the Gulf war.

"The people on the street in Iraq suffered too much from the sanctions. Turkey also suffered a lot from the sanctions, (losing) millions of dollars," he said.

"Iraq should do something to (be) part of the international community again under the request of the United Nations."

Mr. Demirel said he was not concerned about whether Iraq fulfilled all U.N. resolutions before sanctions were lifted.

"I'm interested in the result. I don't mind which way is right," he said. Iraq's return to the world community

would be in the interests of Turkey and "many people in the Middle East."

Turkey joined the coalition formed against Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. It cut the vital Iraqi oil artery and later let Western warplanes bomb Iraq from Turkish bases.

Mr. Demirel acknowledged that the Western allies, particularly the United States, remained reluctant to lift sanctions.

Ankara, he said, had made no progress in persuading the United Nations to allow the cleansing of Iraqi oil export pipelines across Turkish territory, idle since August 1990.

Earlier this month Turkish and Iraqi officials held what Hayrettin Uzun, head of Turkey's pipeline company Botas, described on Monday as very constructive talks on the issue.

He told a news conference that 7.5 million of the 12 million barrels of crude inside

the pipeline were in Turkish territory. Turkey had already paid for 3.5 million barrels of it.

Turkey wants to pump out the oil and refill the 966 kilometres long twin pipelines, running from Iraq's Kirkuk oil fields to terminals on Turkey's Mediterranean coast.

"The most important point here is whether the U.N. would see this as a violation of the embargo or not," Mr. Uzun said.

Mr. Uzun said Botas had lost \$1.2 billion as a result of the closure of the pipelines.

"An investment of over \$2 billion is now idle," he said. "Turkey participated in the Gulf war actively on the side of the allies. But I think the embargo has also been imposed on us."

The U.N. Security Council has offered to let Iraq sell up to \$1.6 billion worth of oil over six months to pay for approved imports of food and

medical items and make war reparations. Iraq has refused, saying the offer violates its sovereignty.

Mr. Demirel said the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran and Syria would reiterate concern for Iraq's territorial integrity when they meet in Istanbul on Feb. 8.

"Our interest is in keeping Iraq intact. The territorial integrity of Iraq is very important. If it is broken down there will be great problems in this part of the world," he said.

The three foreign ministers have held two earlier meetings on Iraq, ignoring objections from Baghdad and from Kurds in northern Iraq that they are interfering in Iraqi affairs.

Iran, Syria and Turkey, which each have large Kurdish minorities of their own, are determined to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

## Palestinians arm themselves as they prepare for autonomy

By Karin Laub  
The Associated Press

BUREI, Occupied Gaza Strip

For Faysal Afana, who commands the Fatah Hawks enforcers in this refugee camp, the shiny black pistol tucked under his green camouflage jacket provides all the answers.

"The killers will be killed," Mr. Afana, 24, told a dozen Hawks who sat in a circle of blue plastic chairs in their hideout, a room in an unfinished building deep in the camp's maze of alleyways.

Mr. Afana had called the meeting to discuss what to do about two rival factions that shot it out over control of a weapons cache, killing two bystanders.

The gunfight, and possible reprisal, is the sort of violence that will test Yasser Arafat's ability to establish authority in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, where the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is to take over from the Israeli army.

With self-rule perhaps only months away, Palestinian factions have been hoarding weapons to prepare for a possible power struggle.

Worried civilians are buying their own arms on the black market or digging up caches left behind when Israel drove Egyptian troops and Palestinian fighters out of Gaza in the 1967 Middle East war.

"There is no family that doesn't have a weapon," said Monir Mahbor, 28, a supporter of Mr. Arafat's Fatah faction in Bureij, where 23,000 Palestinians live. "Nobody knows what will happen. Nobody knows what will be the nature of Palestinian security."

In the Sheikh Radwan district of Gaza City, a group of 16 neighbours met with a reporter over coffee. Six said they had weapons at home. One low-level Fatah official said he had bought a pistol after three Fatah leaders were killed this winter, apparently

by rivals.

Israelis say only a few hundred automatic rifles, pistols and hand grenades are in the hands of organised Islamic and PLO groups. But Palestinians have tens of thousands of old firearms retrieved from battlefields, some dating to the rule of Ottoman Turks in World War I.

Most of the modern weapons were bought from the Israeli underworld or stolen from Israeli homes or cars. Others were smuggled across the Egyptian border by bedouins or came in fishing boats. Some even crossed the border via tunnels dug between Gaza and Egypt.

Demand has increased sharply since Sept. 13, when Israel and the PLO signed the accord on Palestinian autonomy.

As a result, prices have been driven up, in some cases more than fivefold. A .38 Smith & Wesson pistol sold for \$390 last fall now costs

\$2,000, said a dealer who supplies the Fatah faction in the West Bank city of Nablus.

One Fatah cell came to him recently with \$40,000 to spend, said the dealer, a 29-year-old Palestinian who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel say they worry about the large number of weapons, but believe the 15,000-member Palestinian police force to be deployed in Gaza and Jericho will be able to take control.

"I don't foresee civil war in Gaza even if there are enough arms and ammunition to conduct one," said Ori Orr, a reserve general and chairman of the parliament's committee on defence and foreign affairs.

"The Palestinians understand what it means to have a war between brothers, and they will try to limit it."

Yigal Carmon, adviser on to Mr. Rabin's right-wing predecessor, Yitzhak Shamir, pre-

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Syria receives second Boeing from Kuwait

DAMASCUS (AP) — Kuwait on Monday delivered the second of three U.S.-built Boeing 727 aircraft which the oil-rich Gulf emirate promised to Syria in appreciation of its support for Kuwait during the 1990 Gulf war. The first of these 21-year-old commercial airliners was delivered last week under an exception to economic sanctions against Syria which prohibit U.S. companies from exporting goods to Syria that have any military or "terrorist" value. The sanctions were imposed in 1979 when the United States placed Syria on its "terrorism" blacklist. The Clinton administration, which for some time had tried to make clear to Syria some of the tangible benefits of cooperating in the Middle East peace process, approved the transfer last month. The second Boeing arrived one day after President Clinton and Syrian leader Hafez Assad held a summit meeting in Geneva. The Boeings are to replace even older planes now in use in the Syrian national airline. Syria and Kuwait this year intend to start a joint venture that will operate international flights and provide services at Damascus airport. "We are moving to develop transportation relations with Kuwait and long distance airline connections will be established between the Syrian and Kuwaiti airlines," minister of Transport Mufid Abdul Karim told Syria's official news agency, SANA.

### Bomb kills motorist in south Lebanon

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (AFP) — A motorist was killed in his car as a bomb exploded on the side of a road in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, an Israeli-backed militia said. The South Lebanon Army (SLA) said it defused a second bomb nearby after the blast on the Sayra-Kfarhoun road in the Jezzine area, an extension of Israel's self-declared "security zone." Earlier Tuesday, SLA forces shot and wounded a civilian who was allegedly trying to steal electric cables from near the militia's headquarters in Marjayoun, a militia spokesman said.

### Qadhafi gets message from Mubarak

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libyan Leader Muammar Qadhafi met Egyptian Information Minister Sawat Al Sherif here Tuesday, who handed him a message from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the official news agency JANA reported. The message concerned bilateral relations as well as Arab and international issues, JANA said, without giving further details. For nearly two years Egypt has been trying to defuse the crisis between Libya and the West over the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988.

### S. Arabia, Yemen open border talks

SANAA (AFP) — Saudi and Yemeni experts have required talks to resolve dispute, their seventh round over the past year, officials said Tuesday. The meeting opened in the Yemeni capital late Monday. Originally scheduled for Dec. 10, it was delayed after Yemen said its delegation chief, Jaafar Ba Saleh, had health problems. The Saudi team was led by Muthab Al Nafisea. In the previous six rounds, the two sides have made no progress, sticking to issues of procedure. The border dispute centres on the provinces of Najran, Jizan and Assir, which came under Saudi control under an agreement signed in 1934. Yemen wants a return of the territories, saying the agreement expired in 1992. It has refused to renew the accord.

### 15-fall tribunal in assassination bid

CAIRO (AP) — Military judges begin this week hearing evidence against 15 alleged Muslim extremists charged with attempting to assassinate Egypt's prime minister with a bomb. The attack, on Nov. 25, killed a 12-year-old girl in her school and injured four fellow pupils but missed Prime Minister Atef Sedki. Officials said Tuesday that nine defendants are in custody, and the rest will be tried in absentia. The court-martial probably will begin on Saturday, officials said. The bomb went off beneath a car outside a suburban girls' school as Sedki's motorcade passed.

## Hague trial of Pan Am suspects U.N. idea — lawyer

EDINBURGH (R) — A plan for a Hague trial for two Libyans accused of blowing up an American airliner over Lockerbie was drafted on the initiative of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, its author said Monday.

Professor Robert Black said his detailed plan, revealed on Sunday, had now been handed to the Crown Office — the body responsible for justice in Scotland — by Lord Trefgarne, a former Foreign Office minister in the Conservative government.

"It needs an act of political will to accept this compromise," Mr. Black told Reuters.

He said that without such compromise the two Libyans — Abdul Baset Ali Moham-mad Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah — would never stand trial.

"It is my firm belief that this plan for a trial under Scots law and procedure in a neutral country — or something very like it — is the only real prospect of bringing the two accused to trial," said Mr. Black.

"As a Scots lawyer, and a native of Lockerbie, I am anxious that whatever evidence there is should be put to the proof of a trial."

Mr. Black, asked about the origin of the plan, said it was drawn up on the initiative of Dr. Ghali but would not expand on the timing or the secretary-general's role.

Eleven Lockerbie residents and all 259 people on Pan Am Flight 103 died when the New York-bound jumbo blew apart over the small Scottish town on December 21, 1988. Britain

and the United States issued arrest warrants for the men in November 1991, saying investigations showed they alone were responsible for planting the cassette radio bomb.

Mr. Black admitted one difficulty with his plan. The proposed trial at the Hague, seat of the International Court of Justice, would be under Scots law and procedure with an international panel of judges instead of a jury.

There is no provision for a panel of judges in murder trials under Scots law, but Mr. Black, Scotland's top legal expert, said there was nothing in law to prohibit this.

Mr. Black, head of the Scots law department at Edinburgh University, has been an adviser to the British government and was called in by Libya as a consultant last October.

He said he visited Tripoli again last week and was sure Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi would accept the plan. The international legal team advising the two men also voiced provisional acceptance at a weekend meeting in Geneva.

Last October, the same team advised the two alleged agents not to surrender for trial in Scotland or America. They said publicly already given to the case ruled out a fair trial by jury.

Britain and the United States insist the two must surrender for trial either in Scotland or the United States. Britain's Foreign Office repeated this stance when the plan for a Hague trial was revealed on Sunday.

## Effort to restore Beirut hits snag

By Donna Abu Nasr  
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — The head of the long-dormant Beirut stock exchange has accused a government-created company of illegally trying to establish a secondary market in its push to rebuild Lebanon's war-ravaged capital.

The charges made by Antoine Khawaja against the Solidere construction company, coupled with other complaints and lawsuits, threaten to disrupt the country's economic recovery three years after the end of the 15-year civil war.

Lebanese and Arab investors have committed nearly \$1 billion in Solidere's plan to rebuild Beirut's devastated downtown. A total of 9.2m Solidere shares were sold at \$100 each, \$276 million more than what the company had expected. Billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Hariri alone invested \$125 million.

Solidere has announced it has commissioned international auditing firm Arthur Andersen to set up a financial market to trade in the company's shares because the Beirut stock exchange has been dormant since 1984.

But Mr. Khawaja told a news conference that any transactions that take place under the Beirut stock exchange would be illegal. However, there are no immediate plans to reopen the Beirut market.

"The setting up of a secondary market is a serious infringement of the law and constitutes an exclusion of the prevailing institutions," Mr. Khawaja said. "We will fight it legally with all the means at our disposal."

He did not elaborate. Solidere spokesman refused to comment on Mr. Khawaja's charges.

The Beirut stock exchange, founded in 1920, was closed by the government 10 years ago to protect shareholders from exploitation and speculation at a time the currency was collapsing as the war progressed.

Solidere, the French acronym for the Lebanese Company for Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District, is working on a \$1.85 billion project to build business towers.

Solidere was also being hit by several lawsuits filed by disgruntled landlords and former tenants of the devastated downtown who complained they were not fairly compensated for property the company took over.

Solidere is also opposed by some religious leaders, who sided with landlords and the former tenants.

The government is trying to win Lebanese war emigres, who have stashed at least \$20 billion in foreign banks, to contribute to the country's reconstruction.

The United Nations has estimated that \$25 billion is needed for the reconstruction effort. An initial \$4.4 billion is needed for the reconstruction effort. An initial \$4.4 billion is needed to start the reconstruction process.

In another sign of an improving economy, Mr. Hariri announced Saturday that Lebanon's foreign currency reserves more than quadrupled to about \$2 billion in 14 months.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Ordy
18:00	N.B.A. Sports
19:00	News in French
19:15	Le Journal De L'Histoire
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Too Close for Comfort
21:10	Documentary — Edgewood
22:00	News in English
22:30	Day One
PRAYER TIMES	
05:11	Fajr
16:42	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
14:36	Dhuhr
17:00	Asr
17:00	Maghrebeh
18:21	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweileh, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632705	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634591	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637481	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrace Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 694195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
Moderate weather conditions will prevail during the day with high clouds building up in the horizon. It will be cold at night with a chance of frost formation in the eastern regions of the Kingdom, and winds will be southerly easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	2 / 17

# JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba	9:24	ZARQA:		Jordan Electricity Authority	..... 815615	Rm Al Nafes Hospital	..... 10232410
Deserts	zero / 18	Dr. Ghassan Al Faqih	..... 916131	Electric Power	.....	AQABA:	
Jordan Valley	8:23	Khalifeh pharmacy	..... 985417	Country	..... 636381	Precoes Hays Hospital	..... 10231411
Yesterday's high temperatures:				RJ Flight Information	..... 108-532020		
Amman 17, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings:				Queen Alia Intl. Airport	..... 108-532010		
Amman 46 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.							

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikha	752495
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih	756988
Dr. Fakhri Tayeh	885081
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad	846771
Firas pharmacy	661912
Fendous pharmacy	779336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Narmukh pharmacy	626752
Al Salam pharmacy	636739
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsiah pharmacy	637641
Najrah pharmacy	626762
Najh pharmacy	847632

DRIBD:

Dr. Ali Al Shugairi	246141
Al Quds pharmacy	—

ZARQA:

Dr. Ghassan Al Faqih	..... 916131
Khalifeh pharmacy	..... 985417

## EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	..... 637111
Civil Defence Department	..... 661111
Civil Defence Immediate	.....
Rescue	..... 630341
Civil Defence Emergency	..... 109
Rescue Police	..... 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	..... 811228
Blond Bank	..... 775121
Highway Police	..... 843402
Traffic Police	..... 846398
Public Security Department	..... 830221
Hotel Complaints	..... 815801
Price Complaints	..... 661176
Water and Sewerage	..... 661176
Complaints	..... 897467
Amman Municipality	..... 787111
Complaints	..... 787111
Telephone Information	.....
Directory assistance	..... 121
Overseas Calls	..... 111230
Central Amman Telephone	..... 623101
Repairs	..... 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	..... 661111
Jordan Television	..... 773111
Radio Jordan	..... 774111
Water Authority	..... 691101

## HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	..... 813813/32
Khalifeh Maternity, J. Amn	..... 642816
Khalifeh Maternity, J. Amn	..... 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	..... 642362
Mabass, J. Amman	..... 636181
Palestine, Shamsiah	..... 664171/4
Shmsiah Hospital	..... 669131
University Hospital	..... 845845
Al-Musashir Hospital	..... 662727/79
The Islamic, Abdali	..... 664127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	..... 664164
Italian, Al-Muhajir	..... 771012
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	..... 775111/26
Army, Marka	..... 891611/51
Queen Alia Hospital	..... 623405/51
Amal Hospital	..... 674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital	..... 10998323
Zarqa National Hospital	..... 10998323
Ibn Sina Hospital	..... 10998672
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital	..... 10999991

Princess Basmah Hospital ..... 10275555 |

Greek Catholic Hospital ..... 10272725 |

## FOR THE TRAVELLER

### QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)512025, where a should always be verified.

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:55	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00	Jeddah (RJ)
09:15	Larnaca (RJ)
16:35	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50	Beirut (RJ)
17:25	Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:00	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:10	Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:30	Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
18:30	Rome (RJ)
02:00	Cairo (RJ)



## Jordan, PLO sign accord on security coordination

By Wafa Amr  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Tuesday signed a six-point agreement on security coordination and cooperation, Palestinian officials said.

The officials said the agreement was signed at the Foreign Ministry Tuesday morning by Abdullah Touqan, head of the Jordanian delegation and Fakhri Shakoura, head of the PLO delegation.

Officials said the security pact was signed one week after the two sides agreed on a draft security protocol during meetings of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee on security, land and borders.

The six-point general draft was sent to the Jordanian and Palestinian political leaderships for approval last week, and officials said minor linguistic modifications were made before the accord was signed.

Officials said the signing of the economic pact between the PLO and Jordan earlier this month paved the way for activation of the six joint committees which were frozen as a result of deteriorating relations because of the absence of coordination.

The joint committee on security, borders and land was the first of the six committees to meet following the improvement of PLO-Jordan relations.

PLO officials said the security pact reflected a sincere desire by both sides to closely coordinate efforts in the future in order to preserve mutual security interests. This coordination, a continuation of the two people's struggles, would continue until the Palestinian lands were liberated, they said.

A Palestinian member of the committee told the Jordan Times that the first article in the pact called for close coordination and exchange of information on security and border issues, "reflecting the fact that Jordan still suffered from

the Oslo complex and wanted assurances that the Oslo experience would not be repeated."

He said that Jordanian committee members had requested Palestinians inform them on details of developments of the Taba talks on border and security issues since Jordan lacks full details on these negotiations.

"We have agreed to find means of providing Jordan with full details of the Taba talks following each round of negotiations," the PLO official said.

The security pact also stated that Jordan would continue to provide Palestinians with training and assistance in the occupied territories in the fields of the committee, and there would be cooperation between the two sides to facilitate the crossing of Palestinians through the bridges.

PLO officials said the original draft, written by the 10-member Palestinian delegation, was amended by the Jordanian delegation before it was ratified by both sides.

Jordanian officials were not available for comment, and PLO officials and members of the committee refrained from disclosing any further details on issues of discussion during the committee meetings.

They only said that the security protocol was the second step, after the signing of the economic pact, in the right direction towards close coordination and improvement of relations between Jordan and the PLO.

They said there was no fixed date set for the next meeting, but it was expected that the other committees would soon start meeting.

It was not clear how this security pact would be translated into action before Palestinians reach agreement with Israel on border and security issues in Taba.

## Main differences over sales tax law remain unresolved

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Parliament might turn out to be the final judge in the dispute between the government and private sector over an expected introduction of a sales tax since some of the differences remained unresolved after deliberations by a special committee.

The committee, which included representatives of concerned government ministries and departments as well as the private sector and some experts in their individual capacities has completed its work and is about to submit its recommendations to the Economic Consultative Committee (ESC)

of the government.

Among the differences that remained unresolved during the work of the committee are whether the sales tax should be levied on landed cost of imported goods before or after adding customs charges and what should be the duration of the first stage of implementing the tax before expanding its coverage of non-trade sectors of the economy.

"There are a few other points of differences over the draft law, but they are relatively minor," said a source familiar with the workings of the committee.

The committee was set up early this month to study the complaints raised by the private sector and entrusted

with specifically studying the points of contention between the business community and the executive authority.

The source said the committee was preparing its recommendations for presentation to the ESC, which in turn will send its findings to the full Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers has to endorse the law and send it to Parliament for endorsement before it could take effect.

But, according to analysts and businessmen, it is unlikely that a compromise could be reached at the ESC or the Cabinet. As such, businessmen are bracing themselves to lobby Parliament to have their way when the draft law goes on the floor for debate.

The government has until mid-February to introduce the sales tax in line with an undertaking with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme agreed to with the international watchdog.

The draft law is expected to be sent to Parliament as an emergency law that would take precedence in lawmakers' debate over all other legislation under their consideration because of the pressing need to introduce the law on time.

There cannot be any backtracking on the agreement to introduce the tax since that would be a violation of the provisions of the economic programme, adherence to

which is vital for Jordan to secure a certification from the IMF to launch fresh debt rescheduling talks with Western creditors.

"Nor can there be any delay beyond the agreed-upon date since the implementation of the tax has already been delayed by more than a year."

"The government could expect a fight in Parliament over the draft law," said a businessman who is actively involved in a campaign launched by the Chamber of Industry against the tax in its present form and structure after having apparently accepted its inevitability.

The business community itself is split over the approach to the draft law. While im-

porters insist that the levy should exclude customs, local industries say it would give imported products an edge over local products since the tax will be charged on the wholesale prices, which will include production costs and overhead expenses as well as manufacturers' profit.

Manufacturers also argued that they will be subject to double taxation, first when their raw materials enter the country and again when the finished products leave their production plants. But this dispute appeared to have been overcome by a proposed arrangement under which the taxes paid on entry of raw materials will be reduced from the tax calculated on final products.

## Credit group loans farmers JD 20m, collects JD 12m

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) last year granted loans to farmers totalling JD 20 million and collected JD 12 million in debts from farmers and farm owners, according to Mohammad Arabiyat, ACC acting director general.

The JD 12 million collected marked the highest rate of collection in five years, said Mr. Arabiyat.

Referring to the nature of the loans, he said that they were used for the improvement of agricultural land, the development of livestock wealth, the financing of poultry projects and the purchase of equipment.

Since its establishment in 1960, the ACC granted loans totalling JD 148 million be-

nefitting 90,000 borrowers who used the monies to promote agricultural production, Mr. Arabiyat explained.

He said part of the loans financed the drilling of 41 artesian wells and helped to introduce modern irrigation techniques in the Jordan Valley, which led to an increase in agricultural output.

One of the main concerns of the ACC, said Mr. Arabiyat, is encouraging needy families, especially those headed by women to invest in farming and obtain loans from the corporation, thus help to improve their standard of living.

According to Mr. Arabiyat, the ACC has already begun such activities in Deir Allah and South Shuneh districts in the Jordan Valley.

To facilitate the procedures the ACC has been issuing loans to farmers in various governorates via its 16 branches around the Kingdom, Mr. Arabiyat said.

Amman loan recipients, he noted, acquired 21.1 per cent of the ACC loans last year, 19.1 per cent, and Karak 16.8 per cent.

In order to ensure income to fund the loans, the ACC has invested JD 1.2 million in four major agricultural companies, Mr. Arabiyat said.

He said the ACC registered capital was JD 12 million in 1980 rising to JD 24 million at the end of 1992. Mr. Arabiyat said the corporation has JD 74 million worth of assets according to 1993 end of year estimates.



President of AL Baiyat Foundation Nassereddin Al Assad Tuesday addresses the opening session of the Fourth Islamic-Christian Dialogue. Also on the podium is Vatican official Cardinal Francis Arinze (Petra photo)

## Religious scholars look to faith as way to safeguard justice

AMMAN (Petra) — The Fourth Islamic-Christian Dialogue opened in Amman Tuesday with a call from Jordanian scholars and laymen alike to safeguard religion as a source of justice and good deeds.

"We have a duty to isolate religion from and keep it safe against political upheavals, whims and changes so that the people will not lose confidence in their faith or suspect religious teachings," said Nassereddin Al Assad, president of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (AL Baiyat Foundation).

Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, at the opening of the three-day meeting, Dr. Assad said Muslim scholars and the heads of the Christian faith have contributed towards bringing closer together the views of the two sides and achieving better understanding between them.

It is hoped that these dialogues in which many senior personalities from the two faiths and their societies participate would help scrutinise those issues that have remained outstanding and unclear and open the way for a better comprehension of the principles on which the two religions are based, said Dr. Assad.

Commenting on Jordan's endeavours to protect the holy places in Jerusalem under the Hashemite rule, Dr. Assad referred in particular to the recent Royal decree for the formation of a commission to handle the affairs of the holy city, grouping Christian and Muslim individuals.

He noted that the present dialogue is dedicated to discussing religions' stand vis-a-vis nationalities, adding that religions do not conflict with nationalistic feelings, but rather advocate ending ex-

trems, ethnic differences and other forms of conflicts.

Cardinal Francis Arinze, president of the Vatican Council on "Promoting Relations with Other Faiths, who is attending the meetings, told the first session that Christianity does not oppose positive nationalities which do not oppose the law of God. Christianity, he said, rather opposes those feelings of superiority over other ethnic groups because such feelings transform nationality into oppressive movements that work against man and God.

A total of 65 scholars are participating in the discussions held at the King Abdullah Mosque in Amman.

They are all scholars from Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Bosnia, Turkey, Senegal, Sudan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, the United States, Malaysia, Spain, Nigeria and France.

## Cabinet to respond to House queries

AMMAN (Petra) — Cabinet ministers are expected to reply to Lower House of Parliament queries on several issues when the House meets Wednesday.

Questions related to the appointment of officials at the Ministry of Youth, the reinstatement of employees after doing national service, milk-testing at Health Ministry laboratories, the Interior Ministry's handling of recurrent names in the voter registration lists, the distribution of students' contributions in government schools, the water situation in the Disi basin in the south, the government's intention to sell its shares in the Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily and in the JETT bus company are among the topics to be tackled in the House sessions.

In addition the House is expected to discuss proposals submitted by several deputies for the amendment of the Civil Pension Law, an amendment to the Passport Law of 1969 and an amendment to the Citizenship Law of 1954.

Such questions as exempting contributions to political parties, upgrading Ajloun District to a governorate, establishing a hospital in the Baqaa area and transforming the Ministry of Public Works and Housing into offices for Parliament members will also be on the agenda.

Parliament sources said that other topics include demands for the creation of health centres, building roads and opening post offices in rural regions.

The House Financial Committee Tuesday held a meeting and set a timetable for discussing draft laws to be referred to it in the future.

The committee examined a draft law on Jordanian companies, another on the consumers tax and a draft law on the customs tax, but deferred further discussions until coordination has been achieved on these issues with the Minister of Industry and Trade.

The committee decided to postpone any discussion of the draft sales tax law until it has been referred to the committee by the government.

## Promoting Socialist thinking in Jordan

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Socialism is now dead; certainly not in Jordan.

A group of 25 political activists recently founded the Socialist Thought Forum which was licensed by the Ministry of Culture earlier this month.

According to Hisham Ghassib the forum aims at reviving interest in socialist thinking.

The forum's cultural activities will initially be confined to organising "socialist-oriented" lectures and festivals.

"Politics in the country is void of ideological background," said Dr. Ghassib, one of the forum's founding members and a physics professor at Princess Sumayya University College for Technology.

"We are in dire need of raising public awareness of socialist thinking that would best be realised within a forum framework."

Dr. Ghassib criticised the cultural environment in the country by pointing to the absence of cultural dialogue and cultural activities among the learned and intellectuals as well as among political parties themselves.

He said that even partisans

and educated people have raised the slogan of democracy as if they are ashamed of socialism.

Nahed Hattar, also a founding member of the forum and managing editor of the Arabic Daily, Akher Khabar, voiced his deep concern and dismay over "the cultural situation" in the Kingdom. He said that the idea of forming such a forum emanated from the need to fill the "political vacuum."

He insisted that the forum is not a substitute for a party since its main objective is to group socialist-oriented intellectuals from different parties and affiliations to enrich dialogue and smooth over differences.

The forum's founding members are a mixture of independents, partisans and former party members, mainly of the Jordanian Communist Party. The forum also intends to encompass Islamist activists of socialist trends.

Licensed on Dec. 26, the forum's application had earlier been rejected because of a Ministry of Interior recommendation that cited "security reasons."

The founding committee members, most of whom are writers and journalists who claim to represent the "opposi-

tion," thinking, took the case to court.

Their anger over what they saw as an illegal and undemocratic decision drove them to launch campaigns against the ministry's decision.

The case, according to Mr. Hattar, reached Parliament and human rights organisations in the country and in Europe.

After lengthy debates with the new Minister of Culture, Amin Mahmoud, the forum was granted legalisation on Dec. 28.

"They are still using the same old methods of the pre-democracy era," said Mr. Hattar. "Opponents to the government's policies are still black-listed."

According to Dr. Ghassib, most of the seminars and lectures organised by the forum will take place at the Jordanian Writers Association (JWA) until they find appropriate space.

The forum depends financially on membership subscriptions as well as donations and fund-raising projects.

In two weeks the board of founding members will elect its board and president, after which they are expected to start launching their cultural activities.

## Group charges government with economic normalisation with Israel

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A group of predominantly leftist political activists Tuesday urged the establishment of a Jordanian popular movement to resist what it called the normalisation of relations with Israel and protect the "Arab character of the region."

In a statement signed by 41 "intellectual, social, political and national personalities," including former and incumbent leftist deputies and heads of leftist political parties, claimed: "We have embarked on economic normalisation of relations with Israel before achieving a just and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

"(The signing) of the Gaza-Jericho accord... the Jordanian-Israeli agenda... and the establishment of the tripartite Jordanian-Israeli-U.S. economic committee, which has recently announced its decision to open branches of Jordanian banks in the West Bank... means that we have reached economic normalisation with

Israel," said the signatories in a statement drafted after a meeting held at the Jordanian Writers Association in December last year and released Tuesday.

The government did not approve the reopening of branches of Jordanian banks in the West Bank until after it signed an economic agreement to that effect with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). It has repeatedly stated that it would not normalise relations with Israel before a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is found.

The signatories claimed that the authorities introduced a "western style" democracy to Jordan in 1989 after riots in the south convinced them that elections were a national demand that "corresponds with Western calls for democracy."

They claim, however, that the government emptied democracy of its social, political and economic essence.

The signatories claim that public freedoms are as absent from Jordan now as they were before the elections of 1989. Only the way in which

the government agencies are practising that "old way" have changed as they are covered with the mask of democracy, the leftist activists say.

The signatories charged that the government reintroduced "martial law" take the country and downplayed the significance of public freedoms laws that were enacted since the restoration of parliamentary life.

"Martial laws were reintroduced through Parliament," said the statement.

It said the government changed the Election Law last year against popular will in a way that created a rift between the people.

Many of the signatories had threatened to sue the government if it changed the Election Law, but failed to do so.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali cited the failure on opposition to take legal action against the change of the law during the confidence session at the Lower House of Parliament as a proof of the legality of the electoral change.

## Ministry urges foreign labourers to obtain special work permits

AMMAN (Petra) — The Planning Committee of the Ministry of Labour Tuesday stressed the need for foreign labourers working in Jordan to obtain special work permits from the ministry.

In its meeting, the committee affirmed that foreign labourers would only be allowed to work in professions that could not be filled by Jordanians.

In another development, Minister of Labour Khaled Ghazawi Tuesday toured the central vegetables market in Amman and met with the director of the market and the

president of the General Union of Agricultural Produce Traders and discussed with them means of regulating the labour market and replacing foreign workers with Jordanians.

The minister also visited several dress-making workshops in Jabal Al Hussein and was acquainted with their work environment and the training offered to their employees.

He called on owners of these workshops to develop their training techniques and urged them to coordinate with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) in this regard.

Meanwhile the Labour and Employment Office in South Shuneh reported that it had issued about 1,900 work permits to foreign labourers in 1993 and approved other 1,913 work permits, thus earning the office JD 63,242 in revenues.

According to office director Kamel Sawalha, the office inspectors also checked on 756 establishments in the South Shuneh district to take a total of the number of Jordanian and foreign labourers employed. These establishments hired 4,050 workers, of which 2,382 are Jordanians and 1,668 foreigners, he said.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

### EXHIBITIONS

- \* Art exhibition by artist Omar Al Basoul at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- \* Exhibition on the art of architecture at the French Cultural Centre.
- \* Photo exhibition by artist Muwaffaq Al Sheikh at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- \* Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talsma" at Baladna Art Gallery.
- \* Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- \* Permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists and "Chair" exhibition at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh.
- \* Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

### LECTURES

- \* Lecture on "Civil Status Law" by Ms. Khadijah Abu Ali at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture at 6:00 p.m.
- \* Lecture entitled "The East Asian Miracle: Lessons to be Learnt" by Dr. John Page, chief economist for the Middle East and North Africa / The World Bank, at the University of Jordan auditorium at 3:00 p.m.

### SPORTS ROUND-UP

- \* A one-hour programme featuring a condensation of the most popular games of the week with play-by-play announcement at the American Centre at 5:00 p.m.



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Editorial and advertising offices:

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## A national Arab American conference — sign of political success and a forum for future work

By Dr. James Zogby

This week Arab American delegates from 26 states will convene in Washington for the eighth National Leadership Conference of the Arab American Institute (AAI). This year's conference will mark the significant advances made by Arab Americans in U.S. politics. The conference will also serve as a forum for setting an Arab American policy and electoral agenda for 1994.

This year's events will be highlighted by the appearance of two Cabinet officials from the Clinton administration and one of the president's closest advisers: Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and Senior Adviser for Policy and Strategy George Stephanopoulos.

Secretary Brown will appear back in the U.S. on the opening day of the conference, following a five-day visit to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Egypt. He will also address the Arab American conference on Saturday, giving a report on his Middle East trip. The commerce secretary will describe his meetings with Palestinian business leaders in the occupied territories at an event co-hosted by Builders for Peace (the U.S. private sector initiative designed to bring American investment to the West Bank and Gaza).

Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Donna Shalala will appear as the keynote speaker at a Friday night banquet saluting Arab Americans in government. Ms. Shalala, the highest ranking Arab American in government, will present an award to former Congresswoman Mary Rose O'Carroll for her service,

both to the government and to the Arab American community. Ms. O'Carroll, an Arab American Democrat from Cleveland, Ohio, served in the U.S. Congress from 1977 to 1992.

In addition to hearing from these and other high-level Clinton administration officials (the Arab American conferees will be invited to the White House for a Friday morning briefing), the conference will feature several panel discussions which show the growing political maturity of the Arab American community.

One discussion will focus on the effects of the Clinton administration's policies on health care, crime and welfare on local communities across the country. This panel will be led by George Stephanopoulos and will include a number of American mayors and local elected officials. This will be an important forum, because local leaders are seeking what assurances they can get that these proposals of the Clinton administration will not place unfair burdens on local government, as was the case with many other federal initiatives over the past twelve years.

A major focus of the conference will be a full discussion of whether or not Arab Americans ought to seek recognition from the national government as an official "minority" group. Six Arab American community leaders will present their views on this subject, and five U.S. government officials and civil rights experts will respond. Then all of the conferees will break out to discuss the issue in an effort to reach some level of consensus as to how Arab Americans should proceed.

The question of minority status is an important one, and very complex. In short, when the U.S. government recognizes a specific group of people as a "minority," it opens the door to a variety of government assistance for business and education that are not open to most Americans. The purpose is to correct historic injustices which have led some groups, such as African Americans and Latino Americans, to have less than their rightful share of some of more lucrative and rewarding aspects of American life.

There are strong arguments and feelings on both sides of the issue, and a national discussion of it is overdue. This conference will provide the first nationwide forum on this topic.

Another discussion, which will focus on the relations between ethnic groups in the U.S., will be led by Senator Joseph Lieberman, a Democrat from Connecticut. This panel will feature leaders from the American Jewish, Italian American, Latino American and Korean American communities. Because most Arab Americans live in urban areas with many other ethnic groups, this is an important issue; and the presence of the leaders of other communities could open the pathway for new relations and stronger with these other ethnic groups.

Foreign policy issues will also play an important role in the conference, as the Arab American community and political leaders in attendance discuss how they can best contribute to building stronger U.S.-Arab ties and support positive developments in the Arab World.

An important highlight of this part of the conference will be a roundtable discussion between leading U.S. and Arab journalists. The U.S. side will be represented by David Broder of the Washington Post and CNN's Frank Sesno. The Arab journalists include Al Qabas editor Mohammad Sager of Kuwait and Jordan's Rami Khouri.

The conference will also include a full discussion of how Arab Americans can play a constructive role in the changing Arab World. In particular, there will be a discussion of the many positive developments now occurring in the West Bank and Gaza, and how Arab Americans might be able to lend practical support.

This annual AAI leadership conference will also focus prime attention on those Arab Americans who are running for public office in the elections coming up this November. There are already 35 announced Arab American candidates who will be attracting the support of the community, a number of whom will be attending the conference.

Of special note are two candidates running for high office who will be featured at a special function at the conference. Spencer Abraham, a Republican, is a major candidate for the U.S. Senate seat in Michigan — a state that is home to 250,000 Arab Americans. Abraham comes into this election having served in a number of important posts in the Republican Party. He most recently served as chairman of the National Republican Committee (NRC), which is the organization responsible for electing Republicans to the House

of Representatives. Before that he served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Vice President Dan Quayle, and came to that post after five years as the head of the Michigan Republican Party.

One other major campaign featuring an Arab American candidate will be the race for governor in Connecticut. Joe Ganim, who was just elected to his second term as mayor of Bridgeport, the state's largest city, has announced his candidacy for the governor's seat after being urged to run by many of his fellow Democrats. And Mr. Ganim is indeed a rising young star in the Democratic Party. After taking over a city literally on the verge of bankruptcy in 1990, he set out on a programme of cutting back spending while simultaneously increasing spending on combating crime. His austerity programme was expected to cost him at the polls but he stunned observers by winning 80 per cent of the vote, which earned him national attention.

Another important event at the conference will be the launching of the Arab American Advisory Council to the Democratic Party. This will mark the first time that the Democratic Party has given formal recognition to a national Arab American group. In even further recognition of the fact that Arab Americans have been accepted as a constituency within the party, David Wilhelm, the chairman of the Democratic Party, will be present to make the official announcement.

On the Republican side, the conference will be addressed by Michael Baroody, an Arab

American who has been named the President of the National Policy Forum of the Republican Party, which is the policy arm of the Republican Party. Mr. Baroody, who served as an official in the Reagan administration, came to the position after five years as vice president for Communications at the National Association of Manufacturers.

This is only a partial list of the programmes and speakers who will appear at this year's annual leadership conference. There may be still more in store for the conference attendees. For example, the White House has indicated that, schedule permitting, Vice President Al Gore will address the conference. And the list of members of Congress who will be addressing the conference at a special luncheon forum on Capitol Hill includes Nick Rahall of West Virginia, Tim Penny of Minnesota, Jim Moran of Virginia, Craig Washington of Texas, and Nancy Pelosi of California.

It is clear from the presence of Cabinet secretaries Shalala and Brown and a high level official like George Stephanopoulos, and the increasingly high level of government being reached by Arab Americans, that things are changing for the community.

Problems, of course, continue to exist for Arab Americans in politics, but the programme of this year's leadership conference demonstrates that the path to political power can bring about very real changes in the life of the community, its access to political decision-makers, and its ability to have an impact on both foreign and domestic U.S. policy.

## Resurrecting the Audit Bureau

THE PRESIDENT of the Audit Bureau in his report to the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament complained that his bureau has been facing "legal obstacles that negatively affect its effectiveness and its activity." In his report on fiscal year 1992, the Audit Bureau chief said that the present law did not meet the bureau's ambition to "tighten monetary control over public funds." He said that the bureau was not financially independent; that it did not have control over public shareholding companies; that the law does not give it authority to persecute offenders and that the bureau chief had no immunity, as specified in the Constitution.

These are serious charges by the overseer of the state budget and the conduct of dispensers of state funds. For how can this office function and recruit suitable staff for such a noble task if it depends on the Ministry of Finance to finance its operation, while it is entrusted at the same time to control the latter's operations? Or, how can government corruption be rooted out, if the bureau is unable to take offenders to court?

In the bureau's report for 1992, for example, it listed over 300 violations of laws, standing orders and standards at various ministries and departments. The bureau also reported that out of 378 developmental projects the ministries of education, water and public works and the municipality of Amman were engaged in, 146 achieved less than 50 per cent of their target. As for embezzlement, the bureau said that since 1972, over JD 33 million and \$1.3 million have been embezzled.

If we have to take those as indicators of a corruption-free credible and efficient government, the conclusion is frightening. The financial management of the country is neither clean nor credible or efficient. And the constitutional body that is responsible for seeing to these qualities, the Audit Bureau, is incapable of carrying out its task because of all the impediments listed by its chief.

The bureau's report now at the House should then prompt the honourable deputies of the people to take immediate action that would address the situation, revitalise the bureau and provide it with the necessary tools to function properly and fully. People will have only little faith in government and Parliament as long as they see and hear of violations of laws and regulations and mismanagement of funds.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THREE YEARS have elapsed since the imposition of the U.N. sanctions and the aggression on Iraq which caused so much suffering to the Iraqi people, and the time has come for the Arabs to terminate the siege and open their borders, demanded Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al-Dustour. The Arab League should spearhead these efforts and bring an end to the plight of the Iraqis and the injustice, said the writer. Criticising the United States for its current efforts to normalise Arab-Israeli relations while the Israelis continue to occupy Arab lands, the writer said that while trying to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict in a manner that would satisfy Israel alone, Washington is maintaining the embargo on Iraq and its people. Everyone realises that Baghdad has fully aided by the U.N. resolution, but the U.S.-led western nations insist on maintaining the sanction as the Arab countries maintain silence vis-à-vis the atrocity, said the writer. The Arab states and the Arab League should not wait for any signal from any source and must accumulate to the wishes of the colonial powers, but rather carry out a collective action to protect their national interests and save their Iraqi brothers, called the writer. He said that the Arabs must not allow themselves to be accomplices to the American crimes against humanity.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al-Shaab daily drew attention to the fact that Israel is trying to solve its economic and social problems by attempting to dominate the Arab World's economy and end the Arab states' boycott of Israeli goods. Najj Aloush said that the Israelis are trying to impose their own style of peace on the Arabs without returning the occupied lands, and are backed in this drive by the so-called new world order. If the Israelis have their way, more Jewish immigrants will be coming to Arab-Palestine and Israel's economic might would prevail in the Arab region, he stressed. The Arab countries are called on never to end the boycott regulations against Israel and should try instead to stop any assistance reaching the Jewish state from outside in order to force it to comply with the U.N. resolutions and end the occupation, demanded the writer. Through capitulation rather than a just peace the U.S.-Israeli alliance is now trying to impose Zionist ideas and end the boycott regulations, added the writer. He warned that normalisation of economic ties with the Israeli was bound to bolster the enemy's might and weaken the Arab stand.

By Imad F. Abdullah

AS ARABS and Israelis analyse the wording and the fine print of the signed peace agreement, it is crucial to look ahead at the future and what lies ahead for Palestinians and the Arabs in general. An understanding of some of the behind-the-scenes forces that led to such events can be very helpful, especially as the more visible factors such as the intifada tend to dominate the news and camouflage other important factors.

In my opinion, the United States under the Bush presidency has been attempting to diffuse the ability of Israel to polarise American Jews at times and maybe compromise them into a position of double loyalty, so long as Israel can claim its own existence was threatened. Other factors for the U.S. include reducing foreign aid because of the large deficit, high taxes, and the resentment of Americans of all forms of foreign aid.

The United States is also trying to minimise capital and technology transfer from the U.S. to Israel, whereby some U.S. entrepreneurs can benefit on many fronts, including reducing their taxes and evading standard U.S. business requirements and laws. By giving Israel "peace", the United States would resolve many such problems. Furthermore, and at the United Nations, the resolutions backed by the U.S. and supporting Palestinian rights could no longer be ignored after the U.N.'s forceful stand for "principles" against Iraq.

Over the years, Israel realised it is fighting not only Arabs but an Islamic depth. Such war could last indefinitely with untold casualties and there may be no winners. The "Jewishness" of the state itself may be diluted with time, as more Jews become secular and as fewer are still discriminated against worldwide, which in the past helped maintain an influx to Israel, especially from the former Soviet Union. On the internal front, Israel's democracy created two strong but divergent parties and several smaller ones that on many vital issues have become heavily dependent on the few Arab votes in the Knesset, which defeated the whole purpose of a Jewish state. Democracy would have created a paralysis for Israel unless it accommodated the very same minority it had tried to dominate.

It should also be expected that unless Israel has substantial benefits, it is not going to accept just any form of peaceful resolution. Israel would never have allowed an agreement unless it had a very decided advantage to dictate its

M. KAHIL



terms, and may have anticipated the eventualities of peace and worked diligently at improving its own position, first by making peace with Egypt and removing it as a military threat, then by destroying Lebanon and its financial and economic threat and by collaborating against Iran and Iraq with the eventual destruction of Iraq and the isolation of Iran.

Meanwhile, the PLO had been reduced in size and effect and could be brought in only when Israel was ready. Yasser Arafat was the man for such a moment to deliver on behalf of the Palestinians, and the PLO had very few bargaining chips to force issues or negotiate from a stronger position.

It is time to look at the future. The "peace process" as it is promoted appears irreversible, from an international viewpoint, and Arabs have to deal with such an eventuality. If the peace process does not begin now, the same issues will be on the table when it happens in the future, whether five or ten years from now, and they will be more complicated. The Arabs believe the problem is not receiving the importance it deserves and, true enough, on the scale of other international problems, it is not looked at with the same magnitude as the Arabs would like it to.

The process itself may be guided by various pressure groups whose interests are not necessarily the same and there may be violent acts at times. All parties must work at it and the challenge to the Arabs is to

build enough strength to counteract the current advantage Israel commands and to build their negotiating position in time. This will build a change of attitude on both sides, although there will always be dissidents as there are even in very peaceful countries.

It is no longer a matter of right or wrong, or a matter of historical facts, although Arabs have always relied on them and were perplexed when "justice, fairness and right" were never acknowledged properly on the international scene. One should only look at what is happening in Bosnia to understand that without tangible benefits few powers have any motivation to risk soldiers and capital on causes. Arabs will find that as they become more economically beneficial to the world they will have more influence.

Israel will attempt to dominate areas of trade and industry that are highly technical and require major international depth, which their worldwide network allows, such as banking and finance, medical technologies and treatment, information and media, publications and printing, and movies and entertainment. Other areas include the gold and diamond trades, light airplanes and helicopters, coast guard speed boats and, in general, small scale industrial and high-tech products. Palestinians will be hired to spearhead Israeli marketing and penetration efforts in the Arab World, to capitalise on their Arab roots and sympathy for them and to minimise possible backlash

against Israelis. Arabs would have to rely heavily on their own worldwide network and rise to the challenge, and the competition can be very healthy to the whole region.

Israel will work at maintaining Lebanon down and out of the picture as Lebanon proved it can be an important financial and business centre. Israel will try to make its ports the shipping destinations of the Middle East inlands, just as these ports have been throughout history, and Aqaba may become a secondary outlet. In tourism, Israel will try to become the first stop for the whole area and will attempt to keep the most tourist dollars by minimising excursion time to neighbouring Arab countries. Probably more than any other Arab destination, Petra will be included in Israeli tours as a one-of-a-kind attraction.

The oil industry and other heavy industries have never been the domain of Jewish interests, who may not have much of a role other than being oil brokerage houses, which can be done from anywhere in the world. U.S. and other worldwide oil companies are giants in this field and will not be challenged.

Arabs may be worried about Israeli products invading their markets but we believe Israel is worried about competing with the Far East and its already strong presence in the Middle East due to low wages and highly advanced labour force. Jordan import tariffs will become a major question in negotiations as Israel will need easy transport routes.

Arabs should anticipate difficulties in dealing with international companies and governments which could be influenced by Jewish interests. There could be many obstacles for the Arabs and it will be implied to them that going through Israeli contacts will resolve such issues. This is done for the Jewish interests and Arabs would do well to learn from it and emulate its success.

The demands and assertions coming from Israel and the Palestinians on what is acceptable to each party now are too numerous, emotional at times, and very conflicting. As in any negotiation, each party should expect the other to make excessive and unreasonable demands in order to use them as bargaining chips and "give in" at the right time. Current positions should not be taken as cast in stone. Expect any agreement between Palestinians and Israelis to become effective only after trial periods, over the long term, based on a phased process that would allow adjustments along the way. That is the norm with today's international agreements in lieu of an "all or nothing" approach.

What will opportunities be for Arab investment and development within the future Palestine and within Israel itself?

One would expect any future Palestinian entity to be a democracy, simply because Palestinians have suffered too long and will not accept it otherwise. Its effects could spill over to neighbouring

countries and the early moves by King Hussein to spread democratic ideals in Jordan could prove very far-sighted and beneficial to Jordan.

Although there is great excitement and commitment now, Arab capital has been historically a "scared capital", requiring numerous safety provisions. This will not be easily achieved as Jewish capital and manpower will compete heavily on the large scale projects. Although Arab capital will be welcomed, Israel will attempt to retain the ability to manipulate and control it. Current favourable regulations may not remain the same; Israeli laws already include high taxation on property and income, more

"The demands and assertions coming from Israel and the Palestinians on what is acceptable to each party now are too numerous, emotional at times, and very conflicting. As in any negotiation, each party should expect the other to make excessive and unreasonable demands in order to use them as bargaining chips and 'give in' at the right time. Current positions should not be taken as cast in stone."

stringent workplace requirements and benefits and stricter environmental controls. Professional and reliable feasibility studies become a must, with a solid and frank assessment of the risks and rewards involved. It is incumbent upon Arab institutions and businesses to evaluate and assess the degree and scope of the coming challenge and its impact on their ability to continue business as usual. Those who will not do that will be swept away in a sea of change.

The writer is a Houston-based architect and building contractor. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.



## U.N. today holds seminar on desertification

THE United Nations International Convention on Combating Desertification is holding its third session at its headquarters in Geneva.

The committee, meeting under the chairmanship of Bo Gellén of Sweden between Jan. 17-20, is tackling issues to be agreed upon, like financial mechanisms, such as proposals to establish a special fund to combat desertification, an international financial corporation and innovative financial sources, and issues related to principles, like the contents of national and regional action programmes, the establishment of a scientific and technological council, the establishment of an evaluation and monitoring centre and dispute prevention and settlement.

The discussions, according to an Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) press release, are being conducted in two working groups: one, chaired by Ahmed Djoghla of Algeria, focuses on continued development of the provisions of the preamble, principles, objectives and commitments of the convention, including financial arrangements and capacity-building; the second, chaired by Anne de Latre, of France, tackles elaboration of defini-

tions, institutional and administrative aspects, exchange of information and legal provision.

Discussions centre on ways to combat desertification in regions such as Asia and South America, with particular attention to Africa.

The draft preamble refers to the global dimension of desertification and its effect on all regions of the world, mentioning the fact that desertification is brought about by several factors including climate variations and human activity.

According to the press release, the current endeavours of the negotiating committee are a result of a major recommendation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in June 1992 which had adopted "Agenda 21," a comprehensive programme of action aimed at reshaping human activities in line with the principles of sustainable development.

UNCED, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are called upon by the negotiating committee to help combat desertification.

The encroachment of the desert is responsible, according to Chapter 12 of Agenda 21, for the spread of poverty and the degradation of over three billion hectares of rangeland.

## Kuwaiti ex-minister on trial denies fraud charge

KUWAIT (R) — Former Oil and Finance Minister Sheikh Ali Khalifa Al Sabah on Tuesday denied any wrongdoing on the first day of a trial of five people accused of embezzling funds from state-owned Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC).

Lawyers for Sheikh Ali, one of the most senior members of the ruling Sabah family to be a defendant in a criminal trial, said the allegations against him stemmed from political differences between the government and the opposition-dominated parliament.

Presenting what they called a procedural defence, his lawyers argued in a packed criminal court in the city centre that under the constitution the court had no jurisdiction to try an ex-minister.

"First, I hold that the court is not specialised. Second, all of these accusations are untrue," Sheikh Ali told Judge Khalid Al Wagayyan.

Asked if he had wrongfully acquired any money, he replied: "I did not learn about anything as a whole or in details."

Officials said they believed Sheikh Ali, chief architect of the emirate's worldwide oil empire, was the first cabinet minister to be put on trial for alleged offences connected with his job.

Sheikh Ali was oil and finance minister from 1983-85, oil minister from 1985 to June 1990 and finance minister from June 1990 to April 1991.

His lawyers requested Judge Wagayyan transfer the case to a special court to be established solely for the purpose of trying former ministers.

Prosecutors said they would respond to the defence request for the transfer of the trial when the case resumes on Feb. 22.

Fellow accused Hassan Qabazard, a former deputy KOTC chairman for financial affairs and the only other defendant to appear for trial, denied carrying out an embezzlement operation.

But Mr. Qabazard admitted acquiring money from KOTC operations on instructions from his then superior, former KOTC Chairman Abdul Fatah Al Badr. Mr. Badr is another of the five defendants.

Defence lawyers said after the hearing they expected to obtain a copy of the charges for the first time on Tuesday afternoon.

A brief charge sheet posted on a wall, listing the defen-

dants in numbered order as Mr. Badr, Mr. Qabazard, Jordanian Nasim Mohsen, Briton Timothy Stafford and Sheikh Ali, said the alleged offences included making an illegal profit and embezzlement.

It said the first three defendants — Mr. Badr, Mr. Qabazard and Mr. Mohsen — were also charged with forging documents.

Mr. Qabazard, in detention since January 1993, was granted bail of 1,000 dinars (\$3,354) after the hearing.

His lawyers asked the court to repay to Mr. Qabazard with interest a sum of money he paid to the authorities in early 1993 — investigators believed the sum had been embezzled from KOTC and demanded it from Mr. Qabazard at the start of their investigations.

The lawyers said the money — which oil officials have said amounts to around \$6 million — was not embezzled from KOTC and was private family money which Mr. Qabazard had paid to the state in the belief he would be granted bail in return.

A judicial official has said the case going before the court alleges fraud involving about \$100 million.

KOTC, a subsidiary of state oil conglomerate Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), operates a fleet that transports crude oil and refined products around the world. The oil minister chairs KPC.

Parliament is conducting a determined probe of allegations of corruption and mismanagement of state finances in the 1980s that MPs allege cost Kuwait billions of dinars.

Lawyers for Sheikh Ali said the court was not sufficiently specialised to hear fraud cases and condemned as invalid parliament's Jan. 11 repeal of a 1990 law that in effect restricts the ways former cabinet ministers may be put on trial.

Lawyer Sheikh Salman Al Sabah, a former justice minister, said the law was still in effect despite parliament's action. Under the law former ministers may be tried only by a court of five judges appointed by the higher judicial council. The agreement of at least four of the judges is required to secure a conviction.

"The conflict between the two major authorities in this country is the reason behind this case," said Abdul Aziz Mursi, an Egyptian law professor acting for Sheikh Ali.

## Rabin accepts Assad comments

(Continued from page 1)

he possible, the Syrians and the Americans... must give Israel security guarantees.

A row broke out Tuesday in the cabinet over Mr. Rabin's proposal.

To organise a referendum setting a precedent in our history — would take months.

block the peace process for its purpose," warned the secretary general of the ruling Labour Party, Nissim Zivili.

The government has already got a mandate from the

people to make peace with Syria," he said, referring to the platform for peace on which Mr. Rabin came to power in 1992.

"A referendum? What for?" asked Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, leader of the ruling coalition ally Meretz, who is considered close to the prime minister.

"The government is sovereign. It has the right and the duty to secure peace accords with Syria and Jordan without resorting to a referendum," he said on Israel Radio.

# Towards a partial solution of the water problem in Jordan

By Dr. Ghazi Bisheh

Experts tell us that water supply will continue to be one of Jordan's most pressing problems in the coming years. With high population growth and industrial expansion, they say, the water resource available for use will fall considerably below the national need.

In view of this evaluation, it is about time that we give some thoughts to appropriate means which would help increase the volume of surface water available for watering and irrigation. For instance, archaeological field work and systematic explorations in the last decade revealed the amazing extent of sophisticated systems for the catchment, storage and distribution of water, which belong to different historical periods.

Notable for their hydrological engineering skills were the Nabataeans. Those gifted people were able to maintain large settlements in the arid regions of southern Jordan and the Negev desert, e.g. Humaima (ancient Auara), Abda, Ruhaiba Sbeita and Kurnub, to mention but a few towns. The annual precipitation rate in these regions is less than 100mm, which is not enough even for dry agriculture. Yet, by understanding the rainfall regime which tends to be highly sporadic, localised and torrential in character, the Nabataeans knew how to harness runoff on hillside slopes and obtain sufficient amount of water to meet their needs.

No less remarkable were the

Umayyads who invested heavily in land reclamation and attempted to push cultivation into the seemingly empty and barren regions of the steppe, or Badiya. It was this policy of land reclamation which led some scholars to consider the so-called Umayyad desert castles as centres for agricultural exploitation rather than desert retreats for hunting and entertainment.

The point is that the landscape of Jordan is strewn with hydraulic structures such as dams, cisterns, reservoirs, barages and aqueducts. Many of these structures are still in a fairly good state of preservation and need only minimum amount of restoration works to make them functional again. I would like to give two specific examples of hydraulic structures which can be restored at an inexpensive cost, bearing in mind that such examples can be easily multiplied.

The first example consists of two substantial stone dams, known as al qanatir, and situated some 13km. To the southwest of Al Qastal and 3km to the north of Arainbeb. The first dam, built across a wadi running from the southeast to the northwest, is 178m. long and 5.15m. thick at the base, tapering to 4.09m. at the top. Repeated floods and lack of periodic maintenance swept away the central section of the dam which is otherwise fairly well preserved. The second dam is situated less than 1km. further upstream. It is 120m. long and 8.20m. thick in the

centre, diminishing to 7.25m. at the sides.

The second example of restorable hydraulic structures concerns a number of reservoirs and cisterns constructed or dug within a limited and well-defined area at the site of Qasr Mshash, situated 23km. to the east of Muwaqqar. At least three such structures in

the area can be easily restored and thereby improve its grazing potential. Such restoration projects will not be only a step towards solving the problem of water shortage, but also a practical means for making archaeology relevant to contemporary society, a point repeatedly emphasised by His Royal Highness Crown Prince

Al Hassan.

It should be pointed out, however, that once such structures had been restored, they would require regular maintenance and periodic cleaning-up in order to make them work at maximum efficiency and to avoid transforming them into hazardous stagnant pools.

Therefore, it is important to identify the concerned authority or party responsible for carrying out the necessary cleaning and maintenance works.

The writer is a former chief of the Department of Archaeology. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.



Al Qanatir dam (file photo)

## Syrians hope Geneva summit heralds peace

DAMASCUS (R) — Many Syrians hope the summit between their leader Hafez Al Assad and U.S. President Bill Clinton marked a breakthrough on the road to peace in the Middle East.

President Assad's news conference with Mr. Clinton which followed five hours of talks with the U.S. president on Sunday was aired live from Geneva and shown in full twice the same evening as part of news bulletins.

Many people said Mr. Assad reflected their thoughts when he called for a just and comprehensive peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Khayriah Ahmad, a housewife and mother of six, said she lost two of her sons in wars with Israel and that she wanted peace so that no more people would be killed.

"I lost two of my sons in

battle and I know the real meaning of peace. It means no more people would be killed. But the peace should be just and should allow us to have our occupied lands back. Otherwise our martyrs would not be happy," she said.

During the news conference Mr. Assad broke new ground when he announced that Syria could have "normal peaceful relations" with Israel under a peace agreement.

"We want the peace of the brave, a genuine peace that can survive," he said.

"If the leaders of Israel have sufficient courage to respond to this kind of peace, a new era of security and stability in which there are normal peaceful relations among all shall dawn."

Syria's talks with Israel held within the framework of the Middle East peace conference

which opened two years ago, were deadlocked over the issue of the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau occupied by Israel in 1967.

Syria held 11 rounds of talks with Israel during the last two years but in September it threatened to boycott a new round if no tangible progress was made on its demand for full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.

But Mr. Clinton announced at the news conference that Syrian and Israeli negotiators would return to Washington later this month to resume the talks.

Many Syrians welcomed Mr. Assad's call for a just and comprehensive peace.

"Why not have good relations among the people of the region?" said Mustafa Tahmouni, a taxi driver.

"This is possible but Israel should prove that it really

wants peace by withdrawing from the lands it occupied by force."

"Peace means prosperity," said Saeed Fahim Bari, an economist. "It means all resources would be directed towards development rather than arms building. We are now allocating the largest part of our resources to defence. If we divert this to development things will be much better."

"I was very happy to see our president say with confidence and courage he wants peace. We want peace to come as soon as possible," said Samira Mahlouf, a university student.

She said she was also fascinated by Mr. Clinton and the courtesy he showed during the news conference and prior to it when he was introduced to the Syrian delegation.

"He is the most handsome president I have ever seen," she said.

## Jordan seeks to shed shackles

(Continued from page 1)

situation and the negative impact of the inspection procedures on the economy.

Shortly after the team's visit, it was reported that it was preparing a report to be submitted to the State Department and the report was positive vis-a-vis the Jordanian concerns.

U.S. Secretary of State Ron Brown told reporters after high-level talks on Monday that "some action" would be taken soon to address Jordan's concerns over the negative impact on its economy of the de-

facto blockade at Aqaba port and the enforcement procedures of the sanctions.

"I expressed Americans' sympathies and understanding for the economic consequences (of the blockade) on Jordan," he said. "We are trying to find ways in which we will continue, of course, to be in compliance with the U.N. resolutions and at the same time in such a way that it is devastating to the Jordanian economy."

"I think you should expect some action soon," he said. "... It is certainly a recommendation that I'll be making."

## Sanaa accuses south of attack

(Continued from page 1)

provocation which could lead the country to catastrophe," it was a "dangerous escalation," he said.

An officer at Aden airport told Reuters aircraft based there did not carry out any bombing raid on northern units, saying such an action would be "civil war and nothing less than that."

He stressed that southern-based warplanes had only carried out routine exercises according to a schedule approved by the country's joint military command and "ordered by Sanaa."

The officer suggested the GPC statement was issued "to justify the deployment by Al Amaliga troops in four areas" in defiance of earlier agreements between the two sides.

He said the northern troops had set up unauthorised roadblocks and detention centres close to the former border.

Ties between Mr. Saleh and the leader of the former South Yemen, Yemeni Vice-President Ali Salim Al Beedh, have been tense since July.

The two men united the country in a 50-50 power-

snaring accord between the GPC and Mr. Beedh's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP). They were later joined by the Islamist Islah in a three-party coalition government following democratic elections last year.

Their dispute has paralysed government amid reports of military road blocks, troop movements and assassinations.

The Muscat-based travellers who visited Yemen this week said they saw tanks which appeared to be of Russian origin and were formerly stationed along the borders of Oman and Saudi Arabia. They were supporting four southern army units of unknown size which were being rushed to Aden.

The latest reports overshadowed the 19-page agreement signed by political leaders in Aden covering the main differences between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh.

It includes timetables for such issues as removal of the armed forces from the main cities, the arrest of people suspected of political murders and greater decentralisation — all among the main YSP demands.

## Sharaa briefs Regent on summit

(Continued from page 1)

flit."

Mr. Sharaa said President Assad reiterated that there would be no real peace if the solution does not cover all parties to the conflict.

"High hopes have been put on the results of the summit," said Mr. Sharaa.

Mr. Sharaa told reporters that the "ball is in the Israeli court" after the summit, and bilateral talks in Washington next week will show Israel's real intentions and "seriousness of its desire for peace."

Heads of the delegations are to resume the talks for the first time since September.

Mr. Assad called for a comprehensive peace with Israel during a joint press conference with Mr. Clinton in Geneva after the summit Sunday.

Mr. Sharaa said the Syrians were astonished by "the contradictory official Israeli reactions" to the summit. He said Syria had expected "a very favourable reception (by Israel) of what was announced during the summit."

Israel's unclear reaction makes Syria have doubts about Israel's intentions regarding a "just and comprehensive peace" in the Middle East, based on United Nations Resolutions, Mr. Sharaa said.

"We were expecting a big welcome to what was announced in the wake of the summit between the two presidents," he said. "Instead of that we are hearing statements on a referendum and demands for more."

"All of this makes us doubt the real intentions of the Israelis in achieving just peace," Mr. Sharaa said.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Tuesday grudgingly accepted Mr. Assad's statements on peace as a basis for continued negotiations but cautioned the Israeli public that the cost of peace was higher than it had expected (see separate story)

## Sharaa briefs Regent on summit

(Continued from page 1)

Damascus radio also slammed Israel's announcement that a referendum may be held over the Golan Heights before any significant withdrawal.

"Syrian land will remain Syrian and will not be subject to bargaining," the radio said.

It accused Israel of "being evasive, by casting doubt on Syria's peaceful intentions and wanting to organise a referendum over the Golan."

The radio said Israeli leaders had already "wasted several opportunities to contribute to peace."

"The very rare opportunity" created by the Geneva summit "will suffer the same fate if the Israelis fail to withdraw fully from the Golan," it warned.

The Lebanese and Syrian presidents are scheduled to meet Wednesday in Damascus to discuss the results of the Geneva summit.

President Elias Hrawi, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri will attend the talks.

President Assad and Mr. Hrawi spoke by telephone Monday and the two agreed to hold the meeting, an official announcement said in Beirut.

At least two radio stations earlier Tuesday said Mr. Hariri was on his way to Damascus. Those reports proved false. The confusion was the result of speculation by local reporters.

Mr. Hariri said Monday the U.S.-Syrian summit had "opened a new page" in the Middle East that could lead to comprehensive peace.

The prime minister was briefed Sunday night by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during a telephone conversation.

Although Mr. Assad specifically mentioned Resolution 425 during the joint news conference with Mr. Clinton after the summit, the U.S. president did not refer to the U.N. decision on Lebanon.

That sparked media speculation in Beirut that Lebanon was not given adequate priority at the talks.

## Taba talks resume; little progress

(Continued from page 1)

Syria to the peace process." "I don't see any reason for negative effects. I only see positive effects," he said.

A member of the Israeli team, asked not to be identified, said the Israelis were awaiting directives on how the Syrian development would influence the Palestinian-Israeli talks.

Dr. Shaath said the Palestinians viewed the Syrian role as positive, because he expected the implementation of U.N. resolutions mandating the return of territory occupied during the 1967 Middle East war, which includes the Golan Heights.

"This is a precedent for our permanent negotiations two years from now," Dr. Shaath said.

Dr. Shaath said the Palestinians would be in Washington at the end of the month when Israel resumes talks with the Syrians as well as Jordan and Lebanon. Israel has expressed reservations about the need to be in Washington while the talks in Taba continued.

Meanwhile, both sides reported progress on the handing over of civilian authorities to the Palestinians. Dr. Shaath said 35 of 38 areas of responsibility had been successfully negotiated.

"One of the things we are finishing this week is the transfer of economic powers," he said.

said.

Israeli team spokesman Ami Gluska said the number was not quite that high, but said at least 17 areas had been negotiated. He said the hard points included water rights, transportation, education and health.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which is opposed to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, said Tuesday President Assad had changed his position on peace with Israel.

PFLP leader George Habash said: "a new Syrian position exists, which President Assad expressed as he explained his concept of peace, which is a comprehensive peace (with Israel)."

Mr. Assad called for a "peace of the brave" with Israel at a joint press conference with Mr. Clinton after the two leaders met in Geneva.

Dr. Habash said he did not expect the summit to have "negative effects" on the PFLP's activities, because the group operated mainly in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank.

On Monday, another Damascus-based group, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), said it was "satisfied" with Mr. Assad's position at the Geneva summit because the Syrian leader "reaffirmed his attachment to U.N. resolutions."

## Israelis wound 14 Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

north, two young Palestinians were slightly wounded on Tuesday when Israeli border guards opened fire at stone-throwers, witnesses said.

In Gaza City, three Palestinians aged between 12 and 16 were shot and wounded by Israeli troops during clashes near a school.

Earlier, an Israeli civilian was seriously wounded when a Palestinian man knifed him at the Erez crossing point between Israel and the Gaza Strip, military officials said.

On Friday an Israeli was fatally stabbed at the same crossing and another civilian wounded before soldiers shot dead the Palestinian. Hamas claimed the attack.

Some 1,500 Palestinians took part in a commemorative ceremony in Gaza City on Tuesday for a member of the Islamic Jihad group killed in

East Jerusalem on Jan. 6 after allegedly attacking and wounding an Israeli soldier.

Four Israeli soldiers were wounded, one of them seriously, when a grenade was thrown at them on Monday in Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip, military and Palestinian sources said.

A military spokesman said the soldiers were on foot patrol at the time.

Other soldiers opened fire in the direction of the attacker, but nobody was hit.

The army sealed off the area and launched a manhunt.

More than 1,000 people took part in a demonstration to commemorate the death of the Hamas member shot dead by soldiers on Friday.

Israeli officials said the Israeli treasury had allocated \$30 million to improve security in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

## Petra Tours — Cyprus Airways hold a party in honour of Jordanian travel and tourist agents for 1993

AMMAN — Petra Tours, general agents of the Cyprus Airways in Jordan, last month organised a lunch at Forte Grande Hotel in Amman in honour of distinguished travel and tourist agents in Jordan.

Petra Tours managers voiced their appreciation of the agents' efforts during 1993. The managers outlined to the audience the general future travel and tourist plans and the significant role played by Cyprus Airways in view of its central geographical location linking Europe with the Gulf and the Middle East.

It is noteworthy that Cyprus Airways operates two weekly flights between Cyprus and Amman during the winter and three flights in summer.



## U.S., Israel sign hi-tech cooperation agreement

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel and the United States signed an agreement Tuesday to boost joint high-technology cooperation for commercial profit.

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, who signed the memorandum of understanding in occupied Jerusalem, said the move should "give pause to own competitors around the world."

"It will bring together some of the world's finest and most innovative minds in ways that will generate new products and new technologies," he said.

Plans for the 14-member commission — government officials backed by an advisory board of academic and industrial experts — were first announced by U.S. President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in

March.

The group's stated aims are to encourage U.S. and Israeli industries to undertake joint high-technology projects, boost scientific exchanges, promote the development of technologies and assist in adopting military technology for civilian use.

"Let there be any mistake, this commission is not about aid, it is about profit," Mr. Brown said at the signing ceremony.

"The commission we create today will strengthen private sector economies in Israel and the United States," he said.

Mr. Brown is on a week-long Middle East visit to discuss with Arab and Israeli leaders expanded commercial development in the region following the signing in September of the Israel-PLO peace deal.

He has already visited Saudi

Arabia and Jordan, and was due to hold talks in Egypt on Thursday and Friday.

At a news conference after the signing ceremony, Mr. Brown called the Arab League boycott of firms with business links with Israel an "anachronism" now that the Middle East is headed towards peace.

Mr. Brown said he planned to meet Wednesday Palestinian leaders and business executives from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"I think that is an important message to send — that the United States is very concerned about economic development in the West Bank and Gaza," he said.

Mr. Brown said the bank had stopped cash sales in clients until Wednesday.

Grandmothers, businessmen and ordinary Russians had stormed exchange offices

## Some Russian banks halt cash dollar sales as rouble falls to 1,650 per dollar

MOSCOW (R) — Russians clamored to buy dollars Tuesday on fears of economic chaos after reform chief Yegor Gaidar's resignation, forcing some banks to stop cash dollar sales and pushing the rouble further down.

The rouble was quoted as low as 1,650 per dollar at the All Russian Exchange Bank and 1,640 at Mezhdombank, far below Tuesday's rate of 1,504 on the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange (MICEX), itself a record low for the exchange.

"The soaring dollar rate is a sign that people want reforms, it is a sign that people want Gaidar and his policies," said dealer Oleg Matvienko from Dialog Bank. He said the bank had stopped cash sales in clients until Wednesday.

Grandmothers, businessmen and ordinary Russians had stormed exchange offices

to buy dollars after the rouble tumbled 7.3 per cent on MICEX to 1,504 from Monday's 1,402.

This represents a 21 per cent loss so far this year and compared to a level of 415 at the start of 1993.

"Everyone is buying dollars — from grannies with cash only enough to buy \$10-\$20 to mafia smugglers who come here and buy thousands of dollars," said Larisa Tshiko, an official at a currency office run by Moskovsky Bank.

"Demand is just soaring. If it weren't for the limits we've set on sales, the people would have cleaned all the dollars we have," she told Reuters.

Economists said a long run on the rouble could wreck Russia's already flimsy economy and drain hard currency reserves now standing at around \$4.5 billion.

Dealers said the central bank,

which poured \$300 million into the market to support the rouble last week alone, sold a further \$23 million Tuesday. In the absence of fresh money from the West, some bankers fear the bank may find it hard to stop the run on the currency.

Dealers feared the rouble could go into free-fall on fears of hyperinflation if monetarist Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov also quit.

Mr. Fyodorov said Monday he would stay only if Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin dumped his sworn enemy, central bank chairman Viktor Gerdshechenko, and conservative deputy premier Alexander Zavarukin — a condition unlikely to be accepted.

Mr. Gaidar, hitherto the symbol of the government's commitment to radical change, resigned Sunday accusing Mr. Chernomyrdin of uncontrolled

state spending behind his back.

"The West had given money to Gaidar, not to Chernomyrdin. Now credits will dry up," said dealer Alexei Zhiltsov from Delovaya Rossiya Bank.

"The rouble will just keep falling until the composition of the government is clear."

Russian bankers forecast the rouble would fall to 1,800 per dollar by the end of this month and as low as 2,000 in February if the government fails to come up with a clear-cut policy statement on how to deal with Russia's ailing economy.

Economic decision-making has been put on hold since President Boris Yeltsin smashed a headline revolt with tanks on Oct. 4, 1993.

If reformers are heavily outnumbered by conservatives in the new government, deflationary policies could be shelved in favour of increased protectionism and higher sub-

sidies for ailing firms — policies also favoured by the central bank.

"Bankers are very nervous because of all this uncertainty," said Vitaly Shneygov, vice-president of Chisombank. "We fear we are approaching a turning point in the economy."

Before the new crisis, inflation had fallen to a 15-month low of 12 per cent in December and output was showing signs of a slow recovery.

The run on the rouble will deal a devastating blow to fragile confidence in the currency, achieved over a period of months after the central bank gradually raised its discount rate to 210 per cent a year from 100 per cent last May.

This, combined with a slow-down in inflation and tougher customs controls, produced positive interest rates for the first time in Russia's history.

## Iran set to ban Coca-Cola again

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is set to ban Coca-Cola again, one year after the soft drink returned to the Iranian market for the first time since the 1979 revolution, a senior official has said.

Mohsen Rafiqdoost, the head of the Foundation for the Needy and War Disabled, said Iran "would never allow the return of Western culture under the cover of economic prosperity."

"God willing, we will soon dismantle all of the Coca-Cola factories throughout Iran," he said, quoted by the daily Rey.

Mr. Rafiqdoost said Islamic activists had complained about the presence of U.S. companies in Iran to the spiritual guide Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"The guidelines set by the leader are at the centre of all political, economic and cultural activities in the Islamic republic," he said.

Islamic protesters vowed last week that they would force Coca-Cola to dismantle their factories.

Mr. Rafiqdoost's foundation is a powerful non-profit organisation overseeing confiscated properties belonging to the associates of the old regime and other Iranians who had allegedly accumulated wealth by illicit means.

Coca-Cola made a comeback in Iran early last year after it was banned following the revolution as a symbol of undesirable Western culture.

The company, operating from the eastern city of Mashhad, has already been a great success, often outselling locally-produced soft drinks.

Full-page advertisements for "the real thing" have been appearing widely in Iranian

newspapers. The company cut prices by 20 per cent two months ago further threatening to bankrupt local opposition.

Last June, the manager of a soft-drink firm which produces a Cola-like drink in Hamadan, eastern Iran, spoke of a "fall in demand for local drinks since Coca-Cola was distributed in the Iranian market."

The decision to ban Coca-Cola follows increasing concern among radical groups here about the return of U.S. companies to the Islamic republic.

The Iranian authorities last week blocked the opening of a hamburger restaurant in Tehran which posed as a branch of the American fast food chain McDonald's.

Islamic protesters opposed to ties with the United States forced the postponement of the opening of the 'Ravaq' restaurant on Jan. 6 after its advertising led them to believe it was McDonald's first branch in Iran.

Ravaq had used the "M" logo on billboards as well as phrases like "universal taste." "First time in Iran," fuelling suspicions that it was McDonald's. The management denied the link.

An official from the culture ministry, which leased out the restaurant, said last week that the management had been ordered to serve only Persian food.

During an international fair in Tehran last December, the display of U.S. industrial and household goods also prompted opposition from Islamic hardliners demanding a total severance of bilateral ties.

The U.S. companies made a strong showing in their first participation at a Tehran fair since the revolution.

## Bundesbank rejects forced rate cuts to aid economy

FRANKFURT (R) — The Bundesbank said Tuesday it would not be forced into easing monetary policy for the sake of the economy, but some analysts see a good chance that German interest rates will come down this week.

In its January monthly report, the central bank said it would continue to use carefully any scope for interest rate changes that emerged from economic and monetary developments.

"A policy of forced interest rate cuts motivated by economic policy is just as much out of the question as is the attempt to find a solution for German economic problems in a mark devaluation brought about by interest rate cuts," it said.

"The Bundesbank will, as it has done so far, carefully

sound out room for manoeuvre on interest rates which emerges from the macroeconomic environment," it added.

The bank's central council is due to meet Thursday at a regular fortnightly meeting to review policy, including interest rate levels.

The primary task for monetary policy was the return to price stability, the Bundesbank said. "In this way it lays the foundation for lasting growth and contributes toward protecting Germany as an industrial location," it said.

Some economists expect the Bundesbank to lower interest rates at this week's council meeting even though the mark is at its lowest level against the dollar in two and a half years.

But others forecast the central bank will hold rates steady for now, preferring to wait for

new data on money supply and inflation to see whether an easing can be justified.

"A falling mark is no problem (for the Bundesbank) as long as it falls slowly," Norbert Braem, economist at Barclays de Zoete Wedd, said.

The mark currently stands at over 1.75 to the dollar — the lowest level seen since the unsuccessful bid to topple former Soviet President Michael Gorbachev in August 1991.

The president of the Federation of German Industry (BDI), Tyll Necker, said there would only be a weak recovery as the German economy pulled out of its worst recession since World War II.

Mr. Necker told journalists in Frankfurt late Monday that growth would only come on the export front as industry benefited from the mark's de-

preciation against the dollar, the yen and other European currencies and from the U.S. recovery.

"Consumption will be seriously burdened by rising unemployment and only weak increases in incomes," he added, referring to tax rises from the start of this year.

Mr. Necker said investment activity this year would be disappointing, even if the likely decline would not be as sharp as last year's 15 per cent fall.

Mr. Necker said the depth of Germany's fourth post-war recession was revealed by the fact that nine per cent of west German jobs in the industrial sector had been wiped out in the space of just 15 months.

The west German engineering and metals sector had lost eight billion marks (\$4.56 billion) within one year and east

German industry, still recovering from the economic effects of German unification in 1990, remained thinly spread over the country.

West German gross domestic product contracted by a record 1.9 per cent in 1993.

Mr. Necker said that, even if there were economic growth this year, unemployment would rise and bring social problems with it. "Rising unemployment is the most serious threat to our social stability," he added.

Mr. Necker said Germany was in a cost crisis and in this context he welcomed the shifting emphasis within German unions, which have recently accepted lower pay rises in

return for greater job security and work time flexibility.

The latest two per cent wage rise for the German chemicals sector was important, not simply for the headline pay increase figure but rather because of the introduction of a broader corridor for working hours and lower pay for new employees.

"There has been a rethink within the union," Mr. Necker said.

Referring to eastern Germany, Mr. Necker said purchasing power was increasing and there were clear signs of improvement in the construction, printing, food, trade and crafts sectors.

## Japan Airlines to cut 5,000 jobs, halve investment over four years

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan Airlines Co. Ltd. (JAL) is to shed 5,000 jobs during the next four years while slashing its planned investment by 400 billion yen (\$3.6 billion), the company said Tuesday.

Among other measures to streamline management and improve the airline's international competitiveness, JAL said it would curtail its operating expenses by 100 billion yen in the fiscal year starting in April.

The troubled airline, unveiling its third restructuring plan within 18 months, said it would also transfer costs offshore through such steps as increased use of its Japan air charter unit, which has lower personnel costs because of its overseas-based crew, for up to

20 per cent of international flights.

"The first key strategy will be to build a lean and flexible operational structure for JAL's international network to maximise profits. The second key element is the increase of domestic revenue from 30 per cent to 40 per cent of total revenues," the company said in a statement.

JAL, which suffered a pre-tax loss of almost \$4 billion last year, maintained its forecast for a loss of 30 billion yen in the year to March. The airline also kept its sales forecast of 970 billion yen unchanged, but said its "basic aim" was to restore revenue to 1,000 billion yen.

The mid-term plan envisages the market for international

passenger services to grow at an annual rate of between four per cent and seven per cent between now and 1997, with JAL's capacity expanding by an annual average of six per cent.

JAL said it would expand South East Asian routes, especially long-haul services and flights to China, while starting new daily services to Europe and across the Pacific. But some Asian routes and predominantly tourist routes, such as Hawaii, Micronesia and Australia, will be transferred to subsidiary airlines.

Domestic demand is expected to grow at an annual rate of between four per cent and five per cent in the same period. JAL said it would boost capacity by nine per

cent, aiming to secure a third share of the local market which is currently dominated by All Nippon Airways Ltd. (ANA).

The proposed reduction in jobs from 22,000 to 17,000 would be achieved by trimming administration, more subcontracting, changes in cabin crew training and other methods of in-flight services handling.

"The reductions will be made by temporarily transferring staff to other companies, establishing new subsidiaries, putting a hold on recruitment and voluntary retirement," the statement said.

JAL said planned investment between 1994 and 1997 would be cut from 840 billion yen to 440 billion yen with the company introducing only 28 new aircraft.

### HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY JANUARY 19, 1994

By Thomas S. Person, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**GENERAL TENDENCIES:** The Sun enters Aquarius as the Taurus Moon squares the Sun and Venus as you eagerly wish to force some issues that had best be left in peace at the moment. Delays now offers opportunities you can utilize later.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Make it a point to get together with the most powerful individual you know and work out business and civic affairs efficiently so that you get approval of all quickly.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Getting personal matters handled properly is very important now. Go to key people and come to a perfect understanding of what must be accomplished.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) You can start an uprising in all of your affairs and get the admiration of those you love by having private talks with authorities and experts who give ideas for early advancement.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Associates and allies are very helpful now in showing you how to advance more quickly. Listen carefully and follow through with ideas thereby gaining prestige and good will as well.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You will gain prestige and promotion if you are particularly careful in handling your particular tasks since these higher-up are watching you.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You are highly inspired

how to get wishes today, so be sure to carry through with ideas. Think better of others, be amusing, accept invitations extended kindly.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You will be impressed with how seriously others take their work and opportunities to advance, see that you follow suit for your success.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Get shopping done in the company of wise friends and also be sure you confer with associates in order to work out a better method of operating in joint interests.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Make the effort to find simpler methods that will also mean economy and you will be more successful and efficient in the future.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 21) It is important to do something nice for others now so that they will like and appreciate you. Entertain them in the way they like best and be happy yourself.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 22 to February 19) Take every opportunity today to show kin that you are devoted to them even though it is necessary that you be out in the business world so much of the time, or at varied activities.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Ideal day to be with allies to thrash out mutual problems. Telephone or correspond with those not easily available. Be sociable tonight.

### THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris

"The most stupid opinions held by one man is 2,412. But you're very close!"

### Peanuts

WASN'T THAT FUN, MARCIE? GOOD OLD FASHIONED PLAY IN THE RAIN, DOWN IN THE DIRT, FOOTBALL!

I THINK I LOST MY SHOES.

AND NOW IT'S STARTING TO SNOW! WE SHOULD PLAY AGAIN TOMORROW.

I NEVER KNEW LIFE COULD BE SO BEAUTIFUL!

### Mutt'n'Jeff

HEH HEH! YESTERDAY I TOLD JEFF TO CHOOSE HIMSELF A SQUARE TOE SHOE WHO'D ALL THE HOUSEWORK JUST BECAUSE I OUTWEIGHED HIM I WON!

HMM, WHAT'S THIS? SOME DOCTOR SAYS THAT BALDNESS IS A SIGN OF GREAT INTELLECT. THAT MOST MENTAL WIZARDS ARE BALD.

HE MUST BE THE EXCEPTION THAT PROVES THE RULE! HE'S GOT A MIND LIKE A CHILD!

JEFF I THINK WE ARE INTELLECTUAL OPPOSITES! THE DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN BY THAT?

SURE! I'M INTELLECTUAL AND YOU'RE OPPOSITE!

### THE Daily Crossword

by Ronald C. Hirschfeld

ACROSS

1. Type of light
2. Legs
3. "A Bell for..."
4. The younger Guthrie
5. Draft status
6. Take it easy
7. Grid
8. Kite
9. Booth
10. Approved
11. Trumpet cues in Elizabethan drama
12. Actor Beatty
13. Upper crust
14. Grit and
15. Contemporary
16. Moral standard
17. Snicker
18. Karamazov and Pavlov
19. "The — of Joe" (1973 film)
20. Note takers
21. Happen again
22. Tote
23. "Dub, three men in a tub"
24. Calypso native
25. Black, pret
26. Excuse
27. Biblical kingdom
28. Division word
29. Moon valley
30. About
31. Mine entrance
32. Pict
33. "Go-well"
34. Come Laos
35. DOWN
36. Part of EAP
37. Pacific island
38. Charlie (convicted one)
39. Literary collection
40. Interlock
41. Devil
42. Covered passageway
43. Peppermint place
44. Jail
45. Japanese city
46. Draft animals
47. Biblical prophet
48. Snake-like fish
49. Spider's home
50. PBI and EPA
51. Anesthetic
52. Melbourne native
53. Painter Guido
54. Thought prof
55. Adolescent
56. Ledger experts
57. English composer
58. Sea duck
59. Cool as a —
60. Army person
61. Rubik's —
62. — genus
63. Urodon
64. Great
65. Release
66. Kick
67. Autos
68. Landed
69. Aswan's river
70. Compensat
71. Maye word
72. Edat

Yesterday's Puzzle Solvers

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### JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argillon

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

BIGEE

KIRPE

BRAFIC

TRAFOC

Now arrange the circled letters to form the words suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: DINER SWASH DITHER SCRIBE

Yesterday's Jumbles: What the swimmers called the cover — SAND WITCHES







# Police clamp tight grip on quake-hit Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (R) — Police clamped a tight grip on Los Angeles Tuesday, enforcing a dusk to dawn curfew as the city struggled to recover from a devastating earthquake that killed at least 30 people and left thousands homeless.

Thousands of police, reinforced by area sheriffs patrolled the streets of the nation's second largest city into the early hours as Chief of Police Willie Williams vowed to move swiftly to prevent looting.

"It's going to be dealt with quickly, very swiftly and we are emphatically," Chief Williams told a news conference late Monday. "If you try something you're going to be arrested and you're going to go to jail."

The people of Los Angeles, pummeled in recent years by a series of natural disasters and

civic unrest, awoke to a major earthquake early Monday which shook houses from their foundations, destroyed freeways and touched off nearly one hundred fires.

It was the biggest earthquake to strike the city in more than two decades, measuring 6.6 on the open-ended Richter Scale and lasting a minute, interminable for a tremor. More than three million of the area's eight million residents felt the quake.

Hundreds were injured and more than a 1,000 buildings were damaged as the force of the earth crumpled buildings like paper and twisted a major freeway overpass that trapped several cars.

Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan tried to rally the city, appealing for residents to stick

together as they begin to rebuild.

"We need to stay calm and cool today, tomorrow and to the difficult days ahead. We are a resilient city," he told a news conference.

City officials begged residents to conserve water and stay off the streets, many of which were eerily empty for a city that thrives on cars.

Police said there was only sporadic looting Monday and several arrests were made.

"We're not going to allow any type of activity that occurred a year and a half ago to occur any place in the city of Los Angeles," Police Chief Williams said, referring to the riots following the Rodney King beating trial.

Only emergency workers, military personnel on active duty, or medical personnel would be exempted from the curfew order.

All Los Angeles district schools will be closed Tuesday, but city workers were told to report for duty to help sort out the many problems expected to plague the area for the foreseeable future.



Residents look at a connector ramp off of Interstate 5 that collapsed onto a car and claimed the life of a police officer following an earthquake in California (AFP photo)



A gas main on fire throws flames into the air after it broke and exploded destroying nearby houses in Northridge, California, following the earthquake (AFP photo)

More than 15,000 people were homeless and tent cities sprang up around the area as many feared to return to their damaged homes in case of another major earthquake.

In abandoned fields and in parks, people were buddled in sleeping bags and tried to stay calm by playing cards and listening to music. Some were scrubbed up in their cars trying to get some sleep.

The city set up dozens of shelters, including one in Hollywood high, for people whose homes were destroyed. The Red Cross appealed for donations of food and clothing.

More than one million homes lost power but officials at Southern California Edison said they expected to restore service shortly.

Rescue workers, using sophisticated equipment and dogs, searched throughout the night at a three-storey apartment building in Northridge, the epicentre of the quake, where 15 people perished.

"Rescue workers will remain at the building until every square foot has been searched," said firefighter Mark Savage. "We're working as fast as we can."

President Bill Clinton declared southern California a disaster area, freeing the way for federal relief aid, while Governor Pete Wilson mobilised over 1,500 National Guard troops and promised to rush more aid to the area.

The city was rocked by a storm of more than 200 aftershocks Monday and Tuesday, the strongest of which measured 5.5.

Officials, however, said despite the magnitude of the quake it was not the much feared "big one" — an 8.0-magnitude quake erupting from the infamous San Andreas Fault, which could kill thousands and cause billions of dollars in damage.

But it was the most devastating quake to hit the United States since the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, which killed 64 people.

The Los Angeles quake struck at 4:31 a.m. PST (1231 GMT) — two hours before the morning rush hour would have begun on a normal work day. Monday was a national holiday.

The massive earthquake was part of ongoing ground movement that will someday drag Los Angeles north toward San Francisco, seismologists said.

The quake pushed the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountain ranges closer together, making the San Fernando Valley slightly narrower and nudging Los Angeles north.

"The big picture is, it's sort of smashing the San Fernando Valley together" even if ever so slowly, said Jim Mori, a seismologist with the U.S. Geological Survey.

The normal speed of change is about a half-centimetre a year. How much it moved Monday must be determined from data still being collected, Mr. Mori said.

The long-range forecast has Los Angeles moving to San Francisco's location "in something like 50 million years."

Monday's quake struck a previously unknown fault connected to the same systems involved in the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake but it was still too far away from the San Andreas Fault to trigger a more powerful quake there, said seismologist Lucy Jones at the California Institute of

Technology.

As television states broadcast images of the California earthquake devastation, the Red Cross switchboard in Miami was flooded with calls from survivors of 1992's hurricane Andrew eager to repay the help they got.

"We're getting lots and lots of calls. We get people that want to volunteer clothes, furniture, people that want to go out there and volunteer," said Aimee Bergeron, a switchboard operator at the Greater Miami Red Cross Chapter.

Ms. Bergeron said the agency will not send volunteers until California Red Cross officials make a preliminary assessment, and then they will dispatch only those with disaster training.

The agency is accepting payments earmarked for quake victims. But, mindful of the mounds of donated clothing that rotted in heaps after the hurricane, they are discouraging donations of cast-off clothing. "It's not what's needed. They need to just sit tight and keep watching TV," Ms. Bergeron said.

Miami's Urban Search and Rescue Team spent the day checking their equipment in case they were summoned to help.

The squad, which belongs to the Miami Police, is ready to travel with search dogs, saws powerful enough to cut

through concrete and listening devices designed to help locate people trapped under debris, team leader Carlos Castillo said.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin Tuesday sent a message of condolences through Mr. Clinton to the families of those killed in the Los Angeles earthquake.

Mr. Yeltsin, whose message was distributed by his press service, said he was certain that Americans' native determination and toughness would enable them to recover quickly from the disaster.

French President Francois Mitterrand expressed his sympathy Monday for the victims of the California earthquake, in a message to Mr. Clinton, presidential palace here said.

"I would like to convey to you the emotion felt in France after the earthquake which has once more hit California and I wish to assure you of the deep sympathy of myself and of my compatriots for the unfortunate victims of this disaster," Mr. Mitterrand wrote.

Japanese stayed glued to their television screens overnight, shivers running down their spines, as networks ran dramatic footage of the Los Angeles earthquake.

They knew the scenes of devastation caused by Monday's earthquake in southern California could be duplicated on Japanese soil at any time.

Like Los Angeles, the heavily

populated Tokyo region is a seismic high danger zone where, scientists say, a huge killer quake is likely sooner rather than later.

Despite Japan's huge seismicological resources, no-one can say when that jolt might come. "With the technology we have today, it is impossible to predict when and where a major earthquake could occur," Hiroshi Araya, of the Central Meteorological Agency, said Tuesday.

Los Angeles had no warning of the most powerful quake to rock the city in more than 20 years.

It was scary stuff for Japanese viewers who are constantly reminded of their own country's unusual vulnerability. Japan, at the meeting point of two tectonic plates, is rocked each year by one-tenth of the world's major earthquakes, seismologists say.

Experts have been trying to find a foolproof way of predicting the next "big one" — a seemingly overdue killer quake like the 7.9-magnitude shock which devastated Tokyo in 1923, claiming more than 140,000 lives.

"We have constantly been striving to improve our prediction ability," said Shigeo Mori, of the meteorological agency.

"But this Los Angeles earthquake has certainly prompted us to think more about the need for sophisticated prediction technology."

## Oldest person in Japan turns 115

TOKYO (AFP) — The oldest person in Japan marked her 115th birthday Tuesday at a home for the elderly in the central Japanese city of Nagoya. Born in Nagoya in 1877, Ikai had a daughter and three sons but all of them have died. She has two grandchildren and four great grandchildren, officials said. She has been bedridden after suffering a stroke at the age of 109. In Japan, the number of people aged 100 or older hit a record 4,802 last September, of whom 80.4 per cent or 3,859 were women, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry. The number of centenarians has surged 31.4 fold since the survey began in 1963 and tripled in the last decade. The ministry officials said the oldest age on record in Japan was 120 years and seven months.

## In China arts, vulgarity subsidises the sublime

BEIJING (R) — China's booming southern province of Guangdong has slapped a vulgar tax on karaoke clubs, ballrooms and similar cultural activities to get money to help promote long-neglected fine arts. Karaoke crooning, Sacharine pop videos, Mawkish fashion shows in smoky supper clubs — such is the state of culture in consumption-crazed China. Now, the official Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday, Guangdong was trying to change a "cultural desert" with the help of a three per cent vulgar tax. "The reform and opening drive has made Guangdong an economic giant," Xinhua said from the provincial capital Guangzhou. "But its cultural development has long lagged behind, with pop music and vulgar video shows flooding the province." Local Communist Party chief Xie Fei ordered three per cent of revenues from ballrooms, karaoke clubs and pop music concerts put in special funds "for the creating and performing of serious and folk arts." Xinhua said the scheme was working, though it did not say how much money had been collected. "Guangdong has earmarked huge sums to host varied 'art festivals', build performing and exhibition halls and improve all kinds of arts facilities," it said. The scheme also provides subsidies to performing troupes of serious music, folk song and dance, theatre and local opera.

## Fyodorov rejects new post; Yeltsin Chernomyrdin seal fate of reforms

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov Tuesday turned down the same post in the new government which Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin is trying to form, his spokeswoman Olga Leonova said.

Mr. Fyodorov, an ally of reformer Yegor Gaidar who resigned Sunday, was Monday offered the job but without the rank of deputy premier that he had held until now.

He said at the time that he would only accept the job if two key centrist figures in Mr. Chernomyrdin's government — Central Bank head Viktor Geraschenko and Deputy Premier Alexandre Zaverucha — be dismissed.

That condition was apparently not conceded.

The development came as President Boris Yeltsin met Mr. Chernomyrdin Tuesday to finalise the makeup of a new government in which conservatives were expected to get the best posts.

Mr. Yeltsin ordered the government reshuffle after a new parliament was elected last month in which pro-reform parties failed to make the expected strong gains while ultra-nationalists and Communists attracted wide support.

Mr. Gaidar, the architect of Russia's free-market reforms, quit Sunday as first deputy premier responsible for the economy, charging that government had approved expenditures that ran counter to his tight monetary policies.

Social Welfare Minister Ella Pamiolova, the only woman in

government, also resigned, citing irresponsible government spending including a proposed plan to build a new \$500-million parliament building.

The departure of "macro-economists" like Mr. Fyodorov from government is causing concern among the country's business and financial community.

The ruble fell heavily to a record low point of 1,504 to the dollar here Tuesday, in the second slump in a week following Mr. Gaidar's resignation and ahead of Mr. Chernomyrdin's expected announcement of a conservative-dominated government.

Meanwhile, President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin put the finishing touches on the sweeping government reshuffle.

The meeting at the Kremlin was to seal the fate of free-market reforms.

Vadim Yegorov, spokesman for the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange, said the fall in the value of the currency was tied to Mr. Gaidar's resignation and an expected surge in government spending.

Ms. Pamiolova also resigned to protest the policy shift of the new government in which conservatives were expected to be granted the powerful posts of first deputy premier.

Mr. Yeltsin ordered the government reshuffle after a new parliament was elected last month in which pro-reform parties failed to make the expected strong gains while ultra-nationalists and Communists picked up a considerable share of the vote.

termed the "destructive" course of reform launched by Mr. Chernomyrdin and called on Mr. Yeltsin to appoint a new premier. Interfax reported.

"The policies of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin discredit the president of Russia. If the president does not want to retreat from reforms, he must mandate another official to form the government," leaders of the democratic movement said in a statement.

Democratic Russia charged that Mr. Chernomyrdin wanted to boost his own authority and satisfy his political ambitions by eliminating strong leaders of reform such as Mr. Gaidar and Mr. Fyodorov.

In his resignation statement, Mr. Gaidar charged that the government was sabotaging reform and cited an agreement to create a joint monetary zone with Belarus and the construction project for a new parliament building as examples of irresponsible government spending.

Ms. Pamiolova also resigned to protest the policy shift of the new government in which conservatives were expected to be granted the powerful posts of first deputy premier.

Mr. Yeltsin ordered the government reshuffle after a new parliament was elected last month in which pro-reform parties failed to make the expected strong gains while ultra-nationalists and Communists picked up a considerable share of the vote.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Russian troops should stay in CIS — Kozyrev

MOSCOW (R) — Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said Tuesday that Russian troops should not be totally withdrawn from the former Soviet republics because the region was of "vital interest" to Russia. In remarks certain to spark alarm in the Baltics as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Mr. Kozyrev said a complete pull-out would cause a "security vacuum" that would be filled by forces hostile to Russian interests. ITAR-TASS news agency said he made his comments to a meeting of Russian ambassadors in Moscow. Mr. Kozyrev said a balance had to be found between a complete withdrawal of Russian forces and a full military presence. It was unclear if he was suggesting Russian troops should stay in Latvia and Estonia, two Baltic states which still have Russian soldiers on their soil. With the exception of the Baltics, Russia has agreements with virtually all the members of the CIS to maintain some of its troops on their territory. But the remarks of the dovish foreign minister were unusual in that they put an emphasis on the need to protect Russian interests there rather than boost the security of these territories.

### King's widow warns of 'arms race'

ATLANTA (R) — Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King Jr., Monday characterised the rising tide of violent crime and guns in America as "an arms race" routed in the spiritual and moral decay of the country's young. But in a speech at the church where her husband once preached, Mrs. King commemorated the anniversary of the late civil rights leader's birth with praise for recent gun buyback programmes and words of hope for Americans as a whole. Mrs. King appeared as part of the ninth commemoration of the U.S. holiday marking the birth of Martin Luther King. The ceremony, held at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in downtown Atlanta where King was pastor, came at a time when many in the civil rights community are expressing fears that King's birth is in danger of becoming a "black holiday." King was slain by an assassin on April 4, 1968, while leading a strike by sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee. James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to King's murder and is serving a 99-year prison sentence. President Clinton praised the slain civil rights leader Monday as "our nation's most challenging and eloquent voice for human rights and human potential." But other black leaders complained that Mr. Clinton's administration has failed to deliver on its promises in the battle for civil rights.

### Biggest Japan scandal claims new victims

TOKYO (R) — Japan's bribery and bid-rigging scandal claimed new victims Tuesday when prosecutors raided the offices of Obayashi Corp, the country's fourth biggest builder, and arrested two senior executives. Company officials said Juichi Konishi, in charge of Obayashi's branch office in Sendai, northern Japan, was arrested by prosecutors after reports he bribed Sendai's mayor with 10 million yen (\$90,000) to win a public works contract. Prosecutors also arrested Vice President Kureaki Hagihara on the same charge, the company officials said. The two are the latest construction industry executives to be nabbed in a roundup that already has netted more than 30 men from seven other big-name firms.

### Over 100 die as Bangladesh doctors strike

DHAKA (R) — More than 100 patients have died without treatment and sick and injured are deserting hospitals across Bangladesh as a national strike by doctors enters its seventh day. Hundreds of patients were being helped by friends and relatives to abandon wards at about 25 government hospitals across the country. "Nobody seems to care for us," said a disgruntled man taking his sick mother out of a Dhaka hospital. Hospital sources said more than 100 patients had died through lack of treatment during the strike. "The patients

are dying or leaving the hospitals," said an official at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. About 10,000 doctors walked out of public hospitals last Wednesday demanding the government implement higher wages and better job security before they returned, medical sources said. The sources said the government had promised to consider the Bangladesh Medical Association's demands, but several meetings between doctors and health officials have so far failed to resolve the crisis.

### Former S. Korean premier dies

HONOLULU (R) — Former South Korean Prime Minister Chung Il-Kwon died of cancer at a hospital in Hawaii, the South Korean consulate in Honolulu said. The 77-year-old Chung, who served as general commander during the 1950-53 Korean War, had undergone treatment for lymph cancer in both Hawaii and Washington in recent years. He served as prime minister under former military strongman Park Chung-Hee from 1964 to 1970. Gen. Chung died at 5:10 a.m. local time, said Park Pil Cheon, South Korea's consul in Honolulu. He is survived by his wife, Park Hye-Soo, and four children. His body is scheduled to be flown to Seoul Wednesday for burial at the national cemetery, family members said.

### Hundreds protest N. Ireland accord

BELFAST (AFP) — Several hundred people attended a rally in Portadown, County Armagh, late Monday to protest last month's landmark Anglo-Irish accord promoting a new peace process in Northern Ireland. The demonstration, called by the Reverend Ian Paisley — headline leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), was the first in a series to be staged to protest the initiative signed on Dec. 15 at British Prime Minister John Major's Downing Street office. Portadown Town Hall was packed with more people standing outside to hear Rev. Paisley and his DUP Deputy Peter Robinson launch a scathing attack on the British and Irish governments — and the Ulster Unionist Party, which has supported the agreement. Despite assurances in the declaration that there will be no change to the constitution of Northern Ireland without a ballot, the headline unionists feel their position has been sold out to the nationalists who want a united Ireland. Rev. Paisley accused Mr. Major of giving in to the terrorists, saying the Downing Street declaration had struck a fatal blow to real peace, stability and democracy.

### Burma may release Aung San Suu Kyi

TOKYO (AFP) — A leader of Burma's military junta has hinted that Nobel Peace Prize winner and democratic movement leader Aung San Suu Kyi, now under house arrest, could be freed in July, according to a Japanese newspaper. Khin Nyunt, first secretary of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), and the regime's number two, told Japanese journalists that the question would be "dealt with in accordance with existing law" which limits the duration of a house arrest to five years. Aung San Suu Kyi, 48, former leader of the Burmese National League for Democracy (NLD), was arrested on July 20, 1989, since when she has been under house arrest in her Rangoon home for associating with "anti-government rebels." The Asahi daily newspaper stressed that the Burmese leader, talking to a group of visiting Japanese journalists, had not explicitly said that she would be released. Asked to confirm that Suu Kyi would be released in July, as cited by Japan's Yomiuri daily, he replied: "I have more to say. We are not creating a new law (to deal with her) but are dealing with the matter in accordance with existing laws."

## Schoolchildren asked to stitch up patients

GLASGOW (R) — An over-worked hospital doctor mistook two 15-year-old schoolchildren for medical students and drafted them to help stitch wounds on his patients. The boy and girl were undergoing work experience at a Glasgow hospital when they were asked, separately, to help. The doctor had not been introduced to the pair, who were wearing white coats. The doctor began stitching the wounds of a patient and, assuming the boy was a medical student, asked him to put in a stitch. Later, on another patient, he made the same mistake with the girl. "Understandably, neither pupil was able to complete the stitch," a hospital spokesman said.

## Greenpeace says it almost got nuclear missile

LONDON (R) — Environmental group Greenpeace said it nearly acquired a nuclear missile from a Soviet soldier in eastern Germany in 1991, but lost contact with him just before the unsuccessful coup in Moscow. Spokeswoman Blair Paisele said Greenpeace told the story to the authors of a book on nuclear proliferation, in which the details appear. The soldier was a senior lieutenant guarding nuclear weapons at a base south of Berlin. Disillusioned, he offered to sell Greenpeace a Scud missile armed with its nuclear warhead for \$500,000 marks (\$285,000) and political asylum.

## All creatures great and small blessed

MADRID (R) — A baby lion joined canaries, snails, cats and dogs in front of Saint Anthony's church in central Madrid for the annual blessing of the animals, a tradition which dates from 1701. About 2,000 people gathered to watch a priest sprinkle holy water over the unusual congregation. The animals and their proud owners then paraded through the streets of the capital.

## Mexican rebels seek Clinton support

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — Zapatista rebels who staged an uprising in southern Mexico begged President Bill Clinton Monday not to stain his hands with Indian blood by helping the Mexican government massacre peasants.

"Troops, planes, helicopters, radar, communications equipment and weapons are used not to fight drug traffickers... but to repress the just struggle of the Mexican people and the indigenous people of Chiapas," said a copy of a letter addressed to the president, the Congress and the people of the United States and distributed to local news

organisations.

"Don't stain your hands with our blood by being an accomplice of the Mexican government," said the one-page letter, which was dated Jan. 13 and delivered by rebels who said they had brought it by hand over the rugged southern hill country.

The letter was signed by the clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee, which heads the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

Peace commissioner Manuel Camacho said he had received a separate letter addressed to the government in which the rebels made demands similar

to those made previously in communiques sent to news organisations.

"I'm returning immediately to Mexico City to brief the president... so that the EZLN can receive a formal response tomorrow morning," he said at a news conference in San Cristobal in the southern state of Chiapas.

In a message delivered Monday to local news organisations, the Zapatistas said: "We reiterate our willingness to take part in a dialogue to reach a just solution to the conflict."

The rebels criticised the government for allowing the army to paralyse indigenous communities.



## Long-shot winner joins Globetrotters

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Don Calhoun made a fortune on one basketball shot and now he is making the sport a career.

Calhoun sank a basket from 22.8 metres last April at a Chicago Bulls game to win one million dollars as part of a promotion.

Now he has quit a sales job that paid just five dollars an hour, to join the Harlem Globetrotters as a shooting guard.

"I never dreamed I would be a Harlem Globetrotter," Calhoun said. "It was something beyond my dreams. I'm really excited."

Calhoun's legendary shot brought him \$50,000 a year for the next 20 years. He sought an NBA tryout but never received a chance. Calhoun's notoriety

brought interest from the Globetrotters, and his attitude impressed executives of the clowning squad and earned him a second chance.

Calhoun was invited to the team's development camp and last month received the coveted red, white and blue uniform. He joined a Globetrotter squad in Spain, signing a one-year contract.

"I'm doing something I enjoy," Calhoun said. "I'm having a great time bringing happiness to people."

Marvin Walters, player personnel director for the Globetrotters, said Calhoun can only make the team a career by improving his ball handling and shooting, million-dollar shot or not.

"Let's face it. That was luck," Calhoun said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### British official faces blackmail inquiry

LONDON (AFP) — British athletics promotions officer Andy Norman is to face an inquiry into allegations that he blackmailed Sunday Times journalist Cliff Temple, who committed suicide. The British Athletics Federation (BAF) investigation will be internal, despite a demand from the British Athletics Writers' Association (BAWA) that it should be independent and judicial. Last year BAF chairman Professor Peter Radford conducted an internal probe into Norman after a complaint from the Sunday Times and he escaped punishment. Explaining the federation's decision to hold another internal inquiry, BAF spokesman Tony Ward said: "It's a matter between an employer and an employee."

The BAWA had demanded that Norman be suspended while any investigations were carried out, but the federation has also rejected this, saying that Norman will continue in his role while the investigation takes place. The BAF's management board will meet Feb. 4, when Norman's role will be discussed.

### 'German-English friendly to go ahead'

BONN (R) — German soccer officials said Tuesday they expected a friendly against England on the anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birthday to go ahead and blamed the British media for whipping up fears that neo-Nazis could upset the match. The German Soccer Federation (DFB) said the game, scheduled to take place April 20 in Hamburg, would be discussed at a special meeting with German security chiefs and the England Football Association (FA) Wednesday. But DFB spokesman Wolfgang Niersbach said: "As far as we are concerned, we expect the match against England to go ahead on April 20 in Hamburg. Obviously if security officials tell us the risk is too great we will consider moving the match." But when the Daily Mirror or whatever publishes a picture from 1938 of the (England) team giving the Hitler salute, what has that got to do with us? This anniversary has no meaning for us whatsoever. Earlier this month, the British newspaper published a picture of the England team giving the Nazi salute at a game in Berlin in 1938. The headline read: "The picture of shame that will haunt every England fan... Germany V England, April 20, 1994. Bah this game on this date." Since German unification in 1990 there has been a resurgence of neo-Nazi and other right-wing extremist violence.

### Becker becomes father

MUNICH, Germany (R) — Three-times Wimbledon champion Boris Becker became a father for the first time Tuesday when his wife Barbara gave birth to a boy. "We're all delighted," Becker told reporters outside the private Munich Hospital where his wife gave birth to a 3.5-kilogramme son. Becker said both mother and son were in good health but he and his wife had not decided on a name for their son. Becker, who had one of the top 10 for the first time since 1985, is taking a break from the game for the first month of his son's life.

### Rams facing shake-up

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Anaheim Stadium, the home of American football's Los Angeles Rams and Baseball's California Angels, faces a bill of \$3.4 million after being damaged by the earthquake that has devastated southern California. The damage might help push away the Rams, who were considering leaving the area because of dwindling attendances.

### Grand National winning jockey quits

LONDON (R) — Grand national winning jockey Hywel Davies, 37, has quit race-riding. "I'm happy and sad but ultimately relieved to be getting out in one piece," the Welshman said Tuesday. "I will really miss the riding but I was getting fed up with everything that goes with it. The travelling, the saunas and horrid feeling of being let down." Davies rode 761 winners, including Last Suspect, a 50-1 chance, in the 1985 Grand National.

## Cavaliers beat Magic in final minute

RICHFIELD, Ohio (R) — Mark Price hit a three-pointer and Gerald Wilkins converted four free throws to key a 9-1 run in the final minute of the fourth quarter as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Orlando Magic 114-107 Monday.

Wilkins had 26 points, all in the second half. Price poured in 25, and Brad Daugherty had 18 points and 16 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who squandered a 13-point fourth-quarter lead before extending their winning streak to four games.

Shaquille O'Neal had a game-high 31 points, including 28 in the second half, and Anfernee Hardaway scored 23 for the Magic, who have lost three of their last four games.

Cleveland, in fourth place in the central division, improved to 17-18 while Orlando, second in the Atlantic, dropped to 20-16.

At Golden State, Latrell Sprewell scored 23 points including a layup and two free throws with less than a minute left to give the Warriors the lead for good in a 104-99 win over the Phoenix Suns.

The warriors have won four straight games and six of their last seven.

Danny Ainge had 18 points and A.C. Green netted 17 for the Suns, who have dropped three of their last four games.

In Chicago, B.J. Armstrong scored 21 points and Scottie Pippen added 20 to lead the red-hot Bulls to their 14th straight home win, a 121-91 rout of the Philadelphia 76ers.

Bill Wennington contributed 18 points off the bench and rookie Corie Blount, starting in place of the injured Horace Grant, set career highs with 14 points and 13 rebounds for the Bulls. Grant was sidelined with tendinitis in his left knee.

Shawn Bradley had 18 points

and Dana Barros 16 for Philly. The Bulls improved to 15-2 at home and have not lost at Chicago Stadium since falling to Boston Nov. 13.

Second-place Chicago, two games behind Atlanta in the central, is 20-4 since a 4-7 start.

In New York, Patrick Ewing scored 13 of his game-high 34 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Knicks to their fifth straight victory, 106-94 over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

New York has won seven of its last eight games and is also 8-0 on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Ewing, who entered the game needing nine points to hit 15,000, became the 68th player in NBA history to reach the milestone.

John Starks had 27 points and 11 assists and Charles Oakley contributed 14 points and 18 rebounds for New York.

Michael Williams led the Timberwolves with 21 points, 18 in the second half.

## NBA

At Washington, Terry Cummings scored a season-high 21 points and Dale Ellis had 20 to lead the surging San Antonio Spurs past the Bulls, 100-87.

Negele Knight chipped in 19 points and Dennis Rodman pulled down 19 rebounds for the Spurs, who played without their leading scorer, David Robinson, who was out with a sprained right knee. Robinson had made 119 consecutive starts.

San Antonio, which held Washington to a franchise-low 23 rebounds, has won six straight to climb within 3½ games of first-place Houston in the Midwest division.

Tom Gugliotta and Don

MacLean had 17 points apiece to pace the Bulls, whose season-high three-game win streak ended.

Washington lost leading scorer Rex Chapman late in the second quarter after he suffered a dislocated right ankle.

In Atlanta, Dominique Wilkins scored all 37 of his points in the first three quarters and the Hawks held off Milwaukee 102-98 to hand the Bucks their sixth straight loss.

The Bucks came back from a 92-72 deficit with 9:31 remaining and chopped the lead to 101-96 with one minute left. Jon Barry keyed the 24-8 run by scoring all of his 11 points.

Mookie Blaylock had 17 points and 13 assists for the Hawks, who improved to 17-1 at home. Atlanta has won six of its last seven in raising its eastern conference-best record to 25-8.

Blue Edwards paced Milwaukee (9-26) with 16 points and Vin Baker had 15.

In Detroit, Karl Malone had 25 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists and Jeff Malone added 25 points as the Utah Jazz breezed to a 109-94 victory over the reeling Pistons.

The Pistons, who trailed by as many as 33 points early in the fourth, lost their 13th straight to fall to 8-26. They are one loss away from tying their franchise-record single-season losing streak of 14 games set in March 1980.

Greg Anderson had 23 points and 16 rebounds for the Pistons, who have dropped eight straight at home.

The game between the Sacramento Kings and the Lakers was postponed due to the earthquake that hit the Los Angeles area. No reschedule date has been announced.

## Stich and Korda crash out of Australian Open



Michael Stich

Melbourne three years ago before falling away.

"I wasn't going to let the lead slip as I did in '91," Stich said.

Asked if Stich's apparent lethargy contributed to his victory, Washington said: "I like to think I did what I had to do to win the match."

Korda, who earned \$1.6 million for beating Stich in the Grand Slam Cup final, was equally disappointing against the 19-year-old Enqvist.

"I lost my timing completely," said Korda, who will turn 26 on Sunday. "I have learnt in my life that you go very slowly up, but you can go very quickly down."

Enqvist reached the last 16 at the U.S. Open last September, beating Andre Agassi along the way, but is ranked only 65th in the world. 54

places below Korda.

Fourth seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden, chasing a third Australian Open title, was much more impressive as he cruised into the second round with a straight sets win over Javier Sanchez.

All the main women's seeds also progressed, although third seed Conchita Martinez of Spain was forced to fight back after dropping the opening set against Natalia Zvereva.

Australian tennis officials have announced a redevelopment programme to upgrade facilities at Flinders Park. The project will cost an estimated \$13.7 million.

Tennis Australia President Geoff Pollard said the money would be spent on building two extra show courts and outdoor practice courts on land adjacent to the existing site.

## Germany top FIFA rankings

ZURICH, Switzerland (R) — World champions Germany were officially named the best national team of 1993 when FIFA issued its end-of-year rankings Tuesday.

Germany edged out Italy and Brazil, as they did in 1992, and will be honoured, along with Colombia, at FIFA's congress in Chicago in June.

Colombia, ranked 21st, took the title of the most improved team of the year jumping 14 places.

FIFA, soccer's world governing body, said a record 659 international matches between 145 countries were played during 1993, with the United States setting what is believed to be a record for the most matches played by one nation in a calendar year.

The Americans took the field 33 times while Mexico played 25 matches.

## Report says Capriati wants to quit the sport

NEW YORK (AP) — Less than four years after bursting upon the tennis scene as a 13-year-old millionaire, Jennifer Capriati is temporarily walking away from the sport, it was reported.

Capriati, ranked No. 12 in the world but out of action with bone chips in her elbow since a first-round loss at the U.S. Open last August, told the New York Times she would not return to tennis until she finished high school.

"I need a break from it," Capriati said. "It's unfortunate that I had an injury, especially one that required such a long recuperation, but I feel I've made the most of my break from the tour. And I've decided I want to concentrate on finishing my senior year."

The Times said Capriati has moved into a rented apartment in the suburbs of Tampa, Fla., away from her family at the Saddlebrook resort in nearby Wesley Chapel, Fla.

Her parents said they supported their daughter's decision.

"I have no monster for a daughter. I have a normal girl who has a special talent to play tennis," said Stefano Capriati, who worked as his daughter's manager and coach until last year.

"She's not rebelling; I would not use that strong a word," he continued. "She's testing everybody — me, her mother, her friends. She wants to see how they react, to her if she doesn't play tennis. And she's testing herself, too."

Already signed to multimillion-dollar endorsement deals, Capriati turned pro in March 1990 and reached the final of her first professional tournament.

At 14, she became the youngest Grand Slam semifinalist at the French Open, the youngest player to win a match at Wimbledon and the youngest player to crack the top 10.

## Association funds reportedly used to finance attack on Kerrigan

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Tonya Harding prepared Monday for her first questioning by officials amid reports that funds from the U.S. Figure Skating Association may have been used to finance the attack on Olympic skating rival Nancy Kerrigan.

NBC news said it learned authorities have bank and wire transfer records that purportedly could tie Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly, to the three men arrested in custody in the alleged conspiracy.

The network also said the records could confirm bodyguard Shawn Eckardt's claim that Gillooly financed the Jan. 6 attack in Detroit.

NBC and the Oregonian newspaper reported that investigators suspect Gillooly used some money, dominated by Harding's supporters to finance her skating, to pay for the hit. The money, the reports said, may have come from the USFSA and other benefactors, including New York Yankees

owners George Steinbrenner.

Shane Minoaka Stant, the man accused of clubbing Kerrigan on the leg, has agreed to be extradited from Phoenix and was scheduled to fly to Portland Tuesday under guard by sheriff's deputies.

Stant turned himself in last week after learning there was a warrant for his arrest in Oregon.

In Detroit, Wayne County prosecutor John John O'Hair told the Detroit Free Press he still did not have "one scrap or shred of evidence that Tonya Harding was in any way involved."

He also said no decision has been made on when any warrants might be prepared.

Gillooly and Harding, who were divorced last year but have reconciled, have denied any wrongdoing.

Harding earned around \$200,000 since 1991, including \$150,000 from ice skating tours, the New York Times reported in Tuesday editions.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### No arms to North, Russia assures Seoul

SEOUL (R) — Russia has assured South Korea it will make certain a reported sale of submarines for scrap to North Korea will not include arms, a South Korean Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday. Paek Nak-Wan, the ministry's director-general for European and Eurasian affairs, called in Georgi Toloraya, minister at Seoul's Russian embassy, Monday "to convey South Korea's interest in the sale," he said. Toloraya said he would confirm the sale, but said any submarines delivered to North Korea would be stripped of all military equipment, the official said. "Russia has promised that it will remove all military equipment before any submarine is delivered to North Korea, if the report is confirmed true," the official said.

### Ties with Israel unlikely, Alatas says

JAKARTA (AP) — Indonesia will not consider opening diplomatic relations with Israel until the Jewish state allows the Palestinian self-determination and withdraws its forces from the occupied territories, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said Tuesday. "Our constitution does not allow us to open diplomatic relations with Israel," Mr. Alatas said when asked to comment about a recent statement by President Suharto that diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Israel were a matter of time. U.S. Senator Hiram Boren said after a meeting with Mr. Suharto earlier this month that recognition of Israel by Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, would help the Middle East peace process.

### Kuwait cannot compensate Indian war victims

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Kuwait cannot pay for expatriate Indians' losses from the Gulf war, a visiting Kuwaiti official said Tuesday, but will press for Iraqi oil sales to pay the claims. Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Al Huthi, chief of Kuwait's public authority for compensation, blamed the "bad economic situation" in the sheikhdom for its inability to compensate either Kuwaitis or expatriates. Mr. Huthi said Kuwait's losses from the 1990 Iraqi occupation and Gulf war came to \$170 billion. Mr. Huthi made the remark at a news conference following talks with Indian officials, who handed him 141,000 claims for a total of \$3 billion in compensation. In a statement issued Monday, the Indian and Kuwaiti governments agreed to speed up efforts to settle the claims through the sale of Iraqi oil, in line with U.N. resolutions.

### EU visa services closed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — The consulates of all 12 European Union (EU) nations suspended the issuing of visas on Tuesday in a sign of mourning for French consular worker Monique Afri, gunned down in Algeria's political violence. French consular offices, which have recently been besieged by up to 6,000 people a day in the capital alone, have closed down indefinitely while a new system is introduced to get rid of the queues and the resulting friction, French officials said. The French lycées here and other French schools in Algeria reopened on Tuesday after a day of mourning Monday in memory of Mrs. Afri, who was shot in the head in Algiers on Saturday as she went to fetch her car by four unidentified gunmen. Mrs. Afri, who was shot in the head in Algiers on Saturday as she went to fetch her car by four unidentified gunmen, was managed to flee. Mrs. Afri was the 26th foreigner to die in attacks blamed by authorities on extremist gunmen, who have been at war with the regime since the army in January 1992 brought about the cancellation of a general election the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

### AUB commemorates slain president

BEIRUT (AP) — Colleagues and friends of Malcolm Kerr, slain president of the American University of Beirut (AUB), marked the 10th anniversary of his assassination Tuesday by placing flowers at the site where he was gunned down on campus. Some 50 faculty members and friends attended the open-air commemoration ceremony near the memorial, erected where Dr. Kerr was shot dead by an unknown gunman outside his office Jan. 18, 1984. He was 52 at the time. The body of Dr. Kerr, an American born in Beirut, was cremated and part of his ashes were buried at the memorial site and the rest in Los Angeles, where his family lives. A capital of a 10m column stone rises about 45 centimetres from the ground behind the stone where the slain president's name is inscribed. Red carnation and white chrysanthemum representing the colours of the AUB emblem were placed at the site.

### Czechs plan missile sales to Iran — report

PRAGUE (AFP) — Czech industrial giant Skoda Pilsen is planning to sell missiles to Iran and to modernise the country's Russian-made tanks, the weekly Respekt magazine reported Tuesday. Respekt quoted details from a company memo on a trip to Iran by Skoda Pilsen Director Lubomir Soudek during which he discussed the sale of a new generation of ground-to-air missiles, a detection system named "tamara," and the modernisation of the T-72 tanks. The magazine said Mr. Soudek had met with the deputy Iranian defence and foreign ministers during his visit to discuss the deals but the company denied that it had had meetings with military officials during the trip. Mr. Soudek also visited the head of the Iranian Nuclear Commission in Tehran to discuss the delivery of a nuclear reactor that Skoda considers "peaceful" technology. Respekt said, Czech Industry Minister Vladimir Dlouhy has warned that Skoda, which is one of 40 companies in the RDA weapons consortium, risk being unable to win export permits from the government for weapons systems.

### Tehran tied to murder of dissident

FARIS (R) — A French newspaper said Tuesday Swiss investigators believed Iran helped carry out the murder of an Iranian dissident in Switzerland in 1990. The left-wing French daily Liberation, citing a leaked Swiss police investigation, said two Iranian diplomats were suspected of supervising the murder. France last month sent home two Iranians wanted in Switzerland for the killing, sparking criticism from Swiss authorities and the U.S. State Department. They are wanted for the 1990 murder in Geneva of Iranian dissident Kazem Rajavi, brother of Masoud Rajavi, the leader of Iran's Iraq-based Mujahadeen-e-Khalq guerrilla movement. "At this stage of the investigation... we are strongly convinced that one of several official Iranian agencies are directly involved in the murder of Kazem Rajavi," Liberation quoted the Swiss police report as saying. Investigators, the newspaper said, believed that all members of the murder group travelled from Tehran on special passports delivered by the Iranian government which exempt them from seeking visas.

### Survey: Scots Conservatives face disaster

GLASGOW (R) — Prime Minister John Major's ruling Conservatives face humiliation in forthcoming European and Scottish regional elections, according to an opinion poll published Tuesday. The monthly System Three poll for the Herald newspaper indicates only 15 per cent of voters support Mr. Major's party. It gives the opposition Labour Party 47 per cent, eight points up from its 1992 general election vote. The independence-seeking Scottish National Party came second with 23 per cent, one point ahead of 1992. Conservatives trailed with 15 per cent, 11 points down from the general election and just one point in front of the Liberal Democrats. The poll sample covered 40 of Scotland's 72 parliamentary constituencies. Labour holds seven of Scotland's eight European seats. The ruling party is campaigning to recapture two seats lost to Labour last time, kicking off last week with a flag-waving tour of key centres by Sir Leon Brittan, European trade commissioner. The Scottish vote will be held in May, the European poll in June.



BERBER RALLY: Demonstrators march Monday in the Algerian town of Tizi Ouzou in protest against extremism and in support of the Berber culture. Reports said at least 150,000 people attended the rally (AFP photo)

## Bosnia talks resume amid Ghali moves towards strikes

GENEVA (Agencies) — Peace talks in Bosnia resumed Tuesday but gloomy negotiators held out little hope for agreement as fighting raged on in the Balkan republic.

As leaders of the warring factions assembled in Geneva, U.N. sources said Secretary-General Boutros Ghali had asked his special representative in former Yugoslavia to draw up plans for possible air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces.

The U.N. chief had directed Yasushi Akashi to draft detailed plans for possible military action to follow up on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) threat of strikes around the eastern Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica and Tuzla airport, the sources said.

Earlier, Lord Owen of the European Union, arriving at Geneva's Palais des Nations before negotiations began between Muslims, Serbs and Croats, said major military offensive made the prospects for agreement "not very high."

His U.N. partner, Thorvald Stoltenberg, said the atmosphere at talks on ending the 21-month civil war "has never been less conducive" since he joined the peace effort eight months ago.

"There is already a large military offensive. We are seeing more fighting on the ground than for very many

months," declared Gen. Owen. He said the Muslim-led government had started an offensive in the capital, Sarajevo, that had brought Serb retaliation.

All three sides were acquiring more weapons, including helicopters, despite a U.N. embargo on arms supplies to the former Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile Dr. Ghali has requested the recall of French General Jean Cot, commander of U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia, French Defence Minister Francois Leotard said in Paris.

Dr. Ghali made the call to Mr. Leotard, French President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur during a visit here last week, the minister said.

Mr. Leotard was speaking at a luncheon of deputies of the governing majority at Mr. Balladur's residence here, participants said.

One reported that Mr. Leotard said he had agreed to Boutros-Ghali's request, but set conditions.

Gen. Cot was reprimanded last week by Dr. Ghali for stepping out of line by urging NATO air strikes against Serbian positions in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Known for his plain-speaking, Gen. Cot made repeated calls for special powers to carry out air strikes whereas

under a May, 1993 Security Council resolution, only Dr. Ghali has authority to call on NATO air power.

In Sarajevo, a U.N. spokesman said the mostly-Muslim Bosnian army and Bosnian Serb forces were locked in "heavy fighting" around Olovo, just north of Sarajevo, and around the capital itself.

Lieutenant-Colonel Bill Aikman said U.N. observers had reported that fighting Monday around Olovo, 30 kilometres north of here, had left "many dead and injured."

The observers, who were able to enter the Muslim-held town of Olovo but who were unable to reach the frontlines, said they had seen a number of military vehicles ferrying wounded from the front. Olovo was also under heavy shelling with at least 100 explosions reported there on Monday, Col. Aikman said.

### Town under siege

Nearly one-third of the 16,000 Muslims trapped by Serb and Croat forces in the northern town of Maglaj are suffering from severe malnutrition, U.N. aid officials said.

U.N. aid convoys have been blocked from reaching Maglaj, about 130 kilometres (80 miles) north of Sarajevo, since Oct. 25. The government-held town has been under siege for seven months.

## 'Reagan authorised Iran-contra'

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Ronald Reagan authorised both the arms sales and military aid that became the focus of the Iran-contra scandal and "knowingly participated" in a cover-up by his top aides, the prosecutor concluded in his final report released Tuesday.

Mr. Reagan, former President George Bush and other Iran-contra figures criticized the report's conclusions as unfair and unsupported by the facts.

The report by independent counsel Lawrence E. Walsh said it found no credible evidence that President Reagan violated any criminal statute.

Mr. Walsh concluded in the 56-page report of his seven-year investigation that Mr. Reagan authorised the sale of arms to Iran in an attempt to win the release of American hostages despite warnings that such transactions might be illegal, the report said.

It concluded that when the operation became public in 1986, Mr. Reagan "knowingly participated or at least acquiesced in the efforts" of his top aides to cover up the arms sales to Iran.

Mr. Reagan issued a statement Tuesday saying that Mr. Walsh's report is "little more than an expensive... vehicle for baseless accusations that he could never have proven in court."

It is disappointing that Mr. Walsh examined over seven years and more than 549 million of taxpayer's money to produce an encyclopedia of old information, unwarranted conclusions and irreparable speculation," Mr. Reagan added.

Mr. Reagan also authorised the sale of arms to Iran in an attempt to win the release of American hostages despite warnings that such transactions might be illegal, the report said.

Despite the finding of no criminal violation, the report said of Mr. Reagan: "Nevertheless, he set the stage for the illegal activities of others by encouraging and in general terms ordering support of the contra" when Congress banned such aid.

Mr. Walsh said that the president's disregard for laws that banned both aid to the contra and arms sales to Iran created a climate in which some of the government officers assigned to implement his policies felt emboldened to circumvent such laws.

In other conclusions, Mr. Walsh's report said that: "Large numbers of 'highly relevant' documents 'were systematically and willfully withheld from investigators by several Reagan administration officials.'"

"There was no evidence that Mr. Bush violated any laws."

## Masoud ready for Hekmatyar truce

BAOGRAM, Afghanistan (Agencies) — The French military commander here said Tuesday that he was ready to discuss a truce with one of the two main rivals.

Armed Gen. Masoud, the top military official for President Burhanuddin Rabbani's army, claimed the government side was gradually winning a war of attrition with its rival factions, and would soon be even stronger.

"Commanders from three provinces... have said they are ready to send us reinforcements," Mr. Masoud said in an interview with the Associated Press at Bagram air base, north of Kabul.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting resumed Tuesday in the capital with tank, artillery and small arms duels near the Kabul River in the southeast part of the city. One rocket slammed into the recently evacuated residence of the Egyptian ambas-

sador, setting the house on fire. Several hospitals were more than 100 metres away from the burning compound. One of the hospitals was hit by a rocket fired from the city.

The Egyptians closed their rifle and machine gun fire during the fighting of August 1992, and the residence was deserted except for Afghan caretaker staff.

"Thanks to God we escaped any injury as we had sheltered in the basement during the rocket attack," said one of the caretakers.

The two-storey building was completely gutted by fire.

The neighbouring house of the Pakistani charge d'affaires was also hit by shrapnel from the exploding rocket, but lost only many of its windows and did not catch fire.

Mr. Rabbani's spokesman told AFP that the president had rejected his rival's demand for his resignation as a precondition to the cessation of the fighting.

## 'Saudis allowing first Arafat visit since war'

By Suleiman Al Khalidi  
Reuter

AMMAN — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chief Yasser Arafat is likely to make a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia and meet King Fahd this week — his first visit since the Gulf crisis ruptured ties, a senior PLO official said.

"Chairman Arafat will hopefully visit Saudi Arabia, this week after receiving an official written acceptance on Monday to his request to perform the Umra and meet King Fahd," a senior PLO official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters on Tuesday.

The visit will be the first by the PLO chairman to any Gulf state since PLO sympathy with Iraq 1990 invasion of Kuwait caused a rift with his former allies.

PLO officials said Mr. Arafat's earlier requests to visit had been rejected but verbal approval came this month when a PLO delegation visited Riyadh for the funeral of a former PLO envoy.

Gulf states cut off funding for the PLO after the invasion of Kuwait. The organisation, which provided substantial aid to the occupied territories, has not recovered.

"We hope the visit will help to resume official aid to the Palestinian people given by the Saudis before the crisis and also provide assistance to the future Palestinian authority in the occupied territories," the senior official said.

PLO officials said Mr. Arafat will seek immediate Saudi

aid to alleviate the organisation's cash crisis. The PLO has termed it an "Arab financial siege."

Saudi Arabia paid \$850 million in state donations directly to the PLO in the 10 years to 1989, including \$6 million a month in the period before Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The PLO is hoping this aid will be restored.

Its hopes are buoyed by an earlier Saudi decision to resume passing on taxes collected from Palestinians working there to the PLO. This aid and private donations are around \$1.5 million monthly.

The PLO says the visit should pave the way for Mr. Arafat being received in other Gulf states except Kuwait. The 400,000 Palestinians living there before the Gulf crisis have mostly left and Kuwait remains deeply antagonistic to the PLO.

Mr. Arafat will seek commitments of aid to a future Palestinian entity, but Gulf states have so far pledged help only to non-PLO institutions in the Israeli-occupied territories.

Officials say Mr. Arafat will seek Saudi mediation to get Gulf states to release money frozen since the crisis. Unlike Saudi Arabia, most also are not passing on taxes from Palestinians working in the region.

"There are hundreds of millions of dollars in frozen PLO assets in Kuwait which have not yet been released and the visit should help us to get this file activated," another PLO official said.

## Aided aides freed

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — U.N. forces Tuesday released eight aides of Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aided, including his right hand man and chief financier Osman Hassan Ali "Ato."

Soon after he was freed, Mr. Osman addressed a rally of about 2,000 cheering supporters who welcomed him with garlands of purple bougainvillea flowers.

Militiamen of General Aided's Somali National Alliance (SNA) armed with rifle-propelled grenades and kalashnikovs, stood guard.

"Without you we would never have succeeded," Mr. Osman, known as "Ato," or the slim man, told the crowd. The eight were the last Aided aides to be held by the United Nations.

Mr. Osman did not mention Gen. Aided's demand for U.N. peacekeepers to quit Somali in what was essentially a non-political speech, but promised to address supporters again on Thursday.

Mr. Osman, 44, was arrested four months ago on suspicion of involvement in the killings of U.S. and U.N. peacekeepers before the world body dropped its hunt for Gen. Aided and suspended a warrant for his arrest in November.

Mr. Osman was held for a time on an island off southern Somalia with two other senior

Aided aides, Mohammed Hassan Awale, the warlord's advisor on international affairs, and Omar Salad Elmi, Gen. Aided's former representative in Ethiopia.

The latter were arrested during an Oct. 3 firefight in which Aided militiamen killed 18 Americans.

Bir: No half-way

The outgoing commander of U.N. forces in Somalia has said that countries which made only a halfhearted commitment to peacekeeping undermined the mission.

Some contributing countries, which he did not identify, were not "committed enough to accept the violence and loss of life associated with war," Turkish General Cevik Bir said.

"... There can be no half measures in a Chapter VII (peacekeeping as opposed to peacekeeping) operation," Gen. Bir said in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali released to reporters on Tuesday.

The letter was made available shortly before Gen. Bir handed over command of U.N. forces to Malaysian Lieutenant-General Datuk Abou Samah Ben Abou Bakar. Gen. Bir had been commander of the U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) for the past 10 months.

## Inman withdraws name as Pentagon nominee

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton's nominee to head the Defence Department has withdrawn his name from consideration to avoid a bruising confirmation battle, according to documents released Tuesday.

Bobby Inman's nomination had run into difficulty over disclosures that he failed to pay taxes for a household employee, a problem which has dogged Mr. Clinton's nominees since it first erupted during Zoe Baird's confirmation hearings for attorney general last year.

Mr. Inman, a 62-year-old retired admiral, informed the president that he was withdrawing in a letter.

"The reality is that my family and I have not found it possible to focus on the positive and ignore the negative, but rather have been drawn daily to the rush-to-judgment distortions of my record, my character and my reputation," he wrote.

Mr. Inman, who has served under Republican and Democratic administrations, said his decision was precipitated by Senator Bob Dole's decision to direct "a partisan response to my nomination."

"Without solid bipartisan support from the leadership at the outset, I bring no special qualifications to the prospec-

ive job," he wrote.

"From Austin I sense elements in the media and the political leadership of the country who would rather disparage or destroy reputations than work to effectively govern the country. I do not wish to provide those elements fodder for their daily attacks," he added.

In a return letter, the president accepted the withdrawal with regret that the nation will be "denied your service."

Mr. Inman's letter was dated Jan. 8, the day that Mr. Clinton left for an eight-day European tour that concluded Sunday.

Mr. Inman, a former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), had been tapped to head the Pentagon on Dec. 16 after Defence Secretary Les Aspin announced his resignation.

Mr. Inman, ended three decades of government service in 1982, when he resigned from the CIA. He also is a former director of the National Security Agency. At the time he left the CIA post, he said he had lost his zest for bureaucratic infighting.

When he accepted Mr. Clinton's nomination in December, Mr. Inman said he neither sought nor wanted the job, but accepted it out of "duty and country."

## Column 800000

### Duchess of York moved to tears by Himalayan peak

LONDON (AFP) — The Duchess of York, the estranged wife of Prince Andrew, said Tuesday she was moved to tears after reaching a 20,000 foot (6,000 metre) Himalayan peak with a group of disabled people. The mountains made her feel small and had given her a calmer outlook on life, she told GMTV in a pre-recorded interview shown on Independent Television later Tuesday. Looking slim and tanned, the 34-year-old duchess, commonly known as "Fergie," spoke of the trek last October accompanying seven disabled people up the mountains in Nepal as patron of the charity Macintyre Care. "The truest statement is when people say the mountains make you feel very small. Basically, that's what I got out of it," she said.

### Mortician may file charges against Marcos family

MANILA (AP) — The family of the late Ferdinand Marcos has refused to pay a funeral parlor for services provided during the five-year wake for the former president's mother, the firm's lawyer said Tuesday. Attorney Napoleon Malinas said the Marcos family owes more than 1 million pesos (\$35,000) to the Malabed Funeral Home for services including embalming, a coffin and flowers for Josefa Ebrahn Marcos. Mr. Malinas said the company was considering legal action against the Marcos family if the bill is not paid soon. Mrs. Marcos died on May 8, 1988 but was buried only last September. The Marcos family delayed the burial until the arrival of the body of the former president from Hawaii, where he died in exile in 1989. Mr. Marcos' body was returned from Hawaii last September and buried in his hometown Batang. The same funeral parlor handled the funeral of the former president. The Malabed firm sent letters to Mr. Marcos' younger sister, Fortuna Barba, begging for the rest. In the letter, the firm's owner Frank Malabed said he had to borrow money to pay his bills because the Marcos family had not paid him. Efforts to reach the Marcos family for comment were unsuccessful. Officials of the funeral parlor said it appeared that internal squabbles within the Marcos family had delayed final payment.

### Magazine opts for fake bushfire photograph

SYDNEY (R) — Australia's recent bushfires produced hundreds of dramatic, heroic and heart-rending photographs which were used worldwide by media outlets, but a local magazine apparently so couldn't find the right shot. So the new weekly Woman's magazine ran a fake cover shot for its bushfire tribute issue last week, but told no one. The photograph shows a bare-chested man wearing an Akabira hat and clutching a crying boy in front of flames. A bold headline says "heroes." A secondary headline says: "The most amazing stories." The only problem is there are no flames in the original shot, which the Telegraph-Mirror newspaper revealed Tuesday. The original shows the man carrying the boy towards a smoke-shrouded car. The flames were courtesy of another shot. Despite requests by journalists, the magazine published by Kerry Packer's Australian Consolidated Press did not explain why it opted for a fake photograph.

### Indonesian girls under 14 marry in their millions

JAKARTA (R) — Almost six million Indonesian girls under the age of 14 years are married or divorced, the official Antara News Agency said. Antara, quoting Central Bureau of Statistics figures, said the province of West Java had the highest number of girls married under 14 years, with about 30 per cent of the total 5.8 million. Mainly Muslim Indonesia, sets the minimum legal age for marriage at 16 years for women and 18 for men.